Martinez-Williams • A Look Ahead To 2011 • JuanMa

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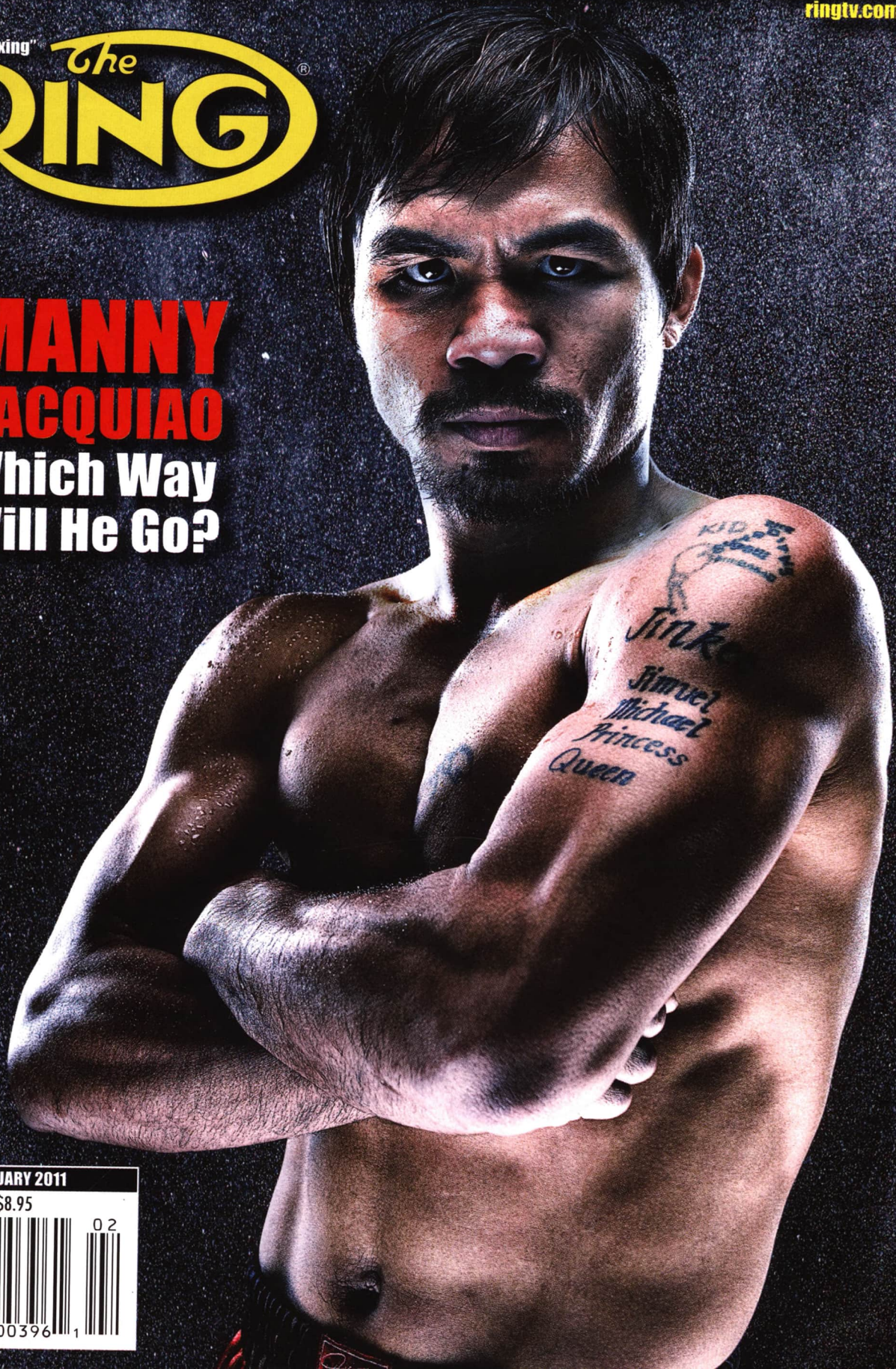
The RING

MANNY PACQUIAO

Which Way Will He Go?



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The Return Of The One-Punch Knockout

Everybody *loves* a one-punch knockout. It's the cherry on top of boxing's bloody ice-cream soda, the most spectacular manner of concluding a prizefight.

We've been lucky of late to witness quite a few of these electrifying endings. You have to start with middleweight champion Sergio Martinez' second-round knockout of Paul Williams, the leading candidate for THE RING's Knockout of the Year as this issue went to press in early December.

The week after Martinez-Williams, Andre Berto handled underdog Freddy Hernandez the way an underdog should be handled. It was over in two minutes and seven seconds, Hernandez the victim of a perfect right to the jaw.

Not too long ago, we saw Devon Alexander uppercut Juan Urango into oblivion and Dmitry Pirog turn Danny Jacobs from hot prospect to damaged goods with a single right hand. Even Matthew Hatton got in on the fun, finishing Roberto Belge with a left hook to the body.

I'm not suggesting that a one-punch knockout era is underway, though I wish it were. But like everything in life, occurrences such as the one-and-done knockout are cyclical. If there's a constant, it's that some fighters are more likely than others to deliver.

During Mike Tyson's prime, it was the anticipation of a knockout, as much as anything, that made him such a mega-star. Fans didn't always get what they craved, but the expectation of watching Tyson bludgeoning another poor sap kept the turnstiles humming anyway.

It doesn't always have to be just one punch. A series of punches resulting in an emphatic kayo also enhances boxing's appeal. Moreover, any kind of knockout eliminates a bad decision—a chronic stain on the sport that can easily drive away first-timers. But show them a clean knockout, or better yet, a one-punch knockout, and they'll be back for more.

I remember the first boxing match I saw on TV as a kid in England. It was Welsh flyweight Dai Dower pecking out a points win over some guy whose name I've forgotten. I couldn't figure out what all the fuss was about.

Nevertheless, a few years later, when I watched the first Archie Moore-Yvon Durelle epic on TV with my father and his buddies, I got it. I had experienced the strange allure of watching men doing violent things to one another and the visceral rush that accompanies it.

Had it been another flyweight tickling contest, I probably wouldn't be writing this editorial. Whether that's a good thing or not, I'll leave it up to THE RING's loyal readers to decide. But I'm pretty sure all of us will agree that there's nothing quite like the one-punch knockout to get the juices flowing. It's just the way we're wired.

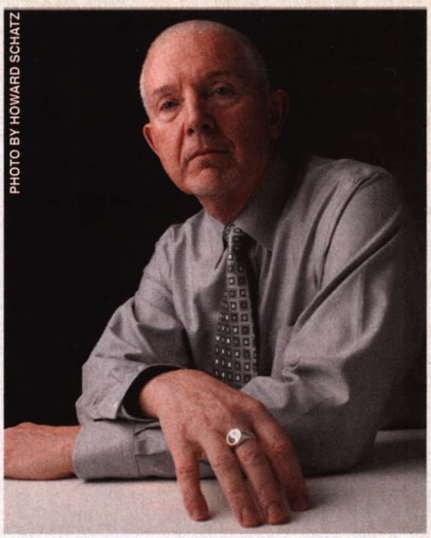
PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHATZ

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This is the first issue featuring our new look, which is also the first digital edition of THE RING—a one-two punch of unprecedented proportions. I highly recommend that all readers who have access to a computer follow the directions in the advertisement on the opposite page and take a free look at the February 2011 digital version.

The twin-project has been a major undertaking for the entire RING team, but a special thanks goes to Creative Director David Romanosky, who crafted the innovative new designs that gives THE RING a bolder, more eye-catching appearance.

Please let us know what you think of both our fresh format and the digital version by writing to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422 or by emailing us at: comeoutwriting@yahoo.com.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

The Ring®
Volume 90, No. 2
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FOUNDER
Nathaniel S. Fleischer
(1888-1972)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Nigel Collins

MANAGING EDITOR
Joseph Santoliquito

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
David Romanosky

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER
James Dinn

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Eric Raskin • Don Stewart

SENIOR WRITER
William Dettloff

IMAGING SPECIALIST
Tuan Doan
tuandoan@rogers.com

CONTROLLER
Deborah L. Harrison

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Kushiek Matthews

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
Kenneth J. Gudaitis

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
Robert Gasparri
(213) 233-2952
sepub@sepublications.com

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
Sports and Entertainment Publications
P.O. Box 433122
Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122
1-800-846-6438
thering@emailcustomerservice.com

SEND EDITORIAL COMMENTS TO:
comeoutwriting@yahoo.com

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WHAT HAS ONE PUNCH DONE FOR WORLD MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION SERGIO MARTINEZ?

Find out on Page 64

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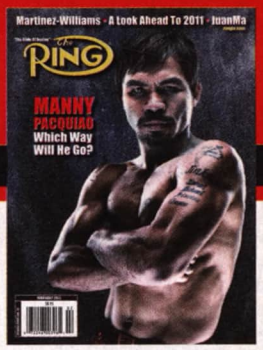

Cover Photo of Manny Pacquiao photographed by **Howard Schatz** for his upcoming book: *AT THE FIGHTS: Inside the World of Professional Boxing*
Cover Design by **David Romanosky**

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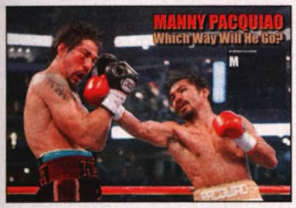

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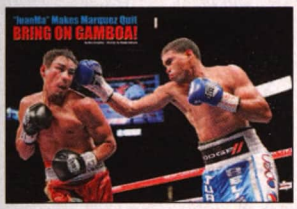
"2011 will be an outstanding year for this sport, and not only because Pacquiao, its biggest star, has exploded, but because a lot is going on to create a renaissance between the ropes, to find the next Pacquiao, and the one after him, and the one after him. And he doesn't have to be American anymore."
By William Dettloff



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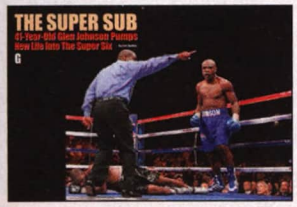

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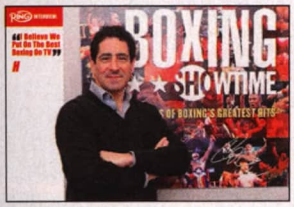

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LION TAMER

If this lion were real, it would have probably bitten off JuanMa's right hand. But you don't even need a whip and a chair to handle MGM's gilded lion, which has stoically posed with hundreds of boxers and millions of tourists with nary a drop of blood shed.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

COME OUT WRITING

GIVE AND TAKE
Is Floyd Mayweather waiting for Manny Pacquiao to wear himself out before agreeing to fight him? Reader Troy Morris certainly thinks so.

PHOTO BY ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dastardly Plot

Pacquiao dominated Margarito. He looked great, but take a look at Pacquiao. He's starting to chip around the edges, especially after fighting yet another much bigger man. Manny gives boxing fans what they want, and we love him for it.

But Manny and Team Pacquiao are also giving Floyd Mayweather what he wants. Floyd is waiting for Manny to wear himself out against the elite of the 147-pound division, while he preserves himself. Then he will fight Pacquiao. Floyd is a coward, but a smart one.

TROY MORRIS
Harrisburg PA

UFC Is Not The Answer

I refer to Jim Bagg's Article titled "UF-Seize The Day" in the November 2010 edition of THE RING. I disagree with Jim, who suggests Brock Lesnar can do well in heavyweight boxing. To begin with, the UFC is full of steroid-pumped thugs who think hitting punching pads in the gym is intense training. It was originally a fantasy for many fight fans and promised fights that were more exiting than boxing.

Many were disappointed when they found that most UFC fights end up on the floor as full-on brawls, with one fighter mounting another. Their moves are very primitive combinations of kick, punch, charge, and grapple. The fights themselves are boring to watch, and viewers feel cheated. Unlike the UFC, the Sweet Science is interesting to watch and requires years of training and dedication. While I agree that the current crop of heavyweights is not the best, looking to the UFC is definitely not the way forward.

Instead, the promoters should look at the real reason why interest in heavyweight boxing has declined over the years. I am sure that many fight fans would agree that Pay-Per-View, greedy promoters, and mainstream TV corporations have killed heavyweight boxing. Rather than trying to capitalize on the dead cash cow that is the UFC, more attention needs to be paid to younger boxers. I can assure you that boxing would be much stronger as a result.

SHAMOON BHANA
Blackburn, UK

COWGIRL CROONERS

We wonder what reader Joe Thompson thought of the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders singing the US National Anthem prior to the Pacquiao-Margarito fight. Thompson wrote to tell us that he's fed up with all the hype surrounding fights today.

PHOTO BY TOM PENNINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

Too Much Razzmatazz

"Hype" is a slang expression from the word hyperbole, which means exaggeration, and, as a boxing fan of many years, I have had enough of it. It started some years ago at weigh-ins, when the fighters, trying to boost the attendance, put on a faux confrontation. Entrances to the ring became an event unto themselves with a rock concert-like atmosphere: flashing lights, smoke screens, and loud, obnoxious noise that some call music. By the time the fighters actually get into the ring, their outfits take center stage—pants down to their ankles, tassels on everything from their shoes to their capes, masks with sequins, sombreros, neck collars, and tattoos. They look like a bunch of clowns.

Moreover, the latest HBO promotion called *24/7* seems to go on forever. Who cares which fighter came from humble beginnings and just wants to make enough money to buy a decent house for his mother who raised 22 kids by herself? Is it asking too much just to see the fight?

JOE THOMPSON
Charlotte, NC

No Joking Matter

As a Mexican-American and longtime boxing fan, I have found it quite impossible to root against any fighter of Mexican decent, especially when squaring off against fighters of different races. But Antonio Margarito has helped me achieve the impossible: I'm actually embarrassed that his ring entrances are usually marked by a huge Mexican flag. Let's pretend that his cowardly, ridiculous story of ignorance regarding the handwrap scandal is true, but the way he joked and made light of the issue on HBO's *24/7* showed absolutely no class or remorse. Then Margarito and the foul, loudmouth Brandon Rios not only insult Manny Pacquiao but also mocked and ridiculed Freddie Roach's severe illness.

VICTOR SALCIDO
salcidovictor@yahoo.com

TO WRITE THE RING

Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422.

comeoutwriting@yahoo.com

E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

Boxing In 3D: The Next Best Thing To The

The David Haye-Audley Harrison bout was the first fight broadcast in 3D in the world, on SkyBoxOffice3D, so I invited some friends to see what all the fuss was about.

Boo! Hiss! The third-round demolition of hopeless Harrison was as premature as it was inevitable. But I did say, "hold on to your 3D glasses." By contrast, the reality of 3DTV in homes is in its infancy, and what may have started as a gimmick in 1950s cinemas has evolved into a real and affordable technology.

Sky Sports believes 3D is here to stay and uses passive technology, which means inexpensive (polarized) cinema-type glasses are used. Most 3DTVs use expensive (active) glasses, costing $150 each. Two years ago, testing 3D during the Ricky Hatton-Juan Lazcano bout, Sky learned the angles and close proximity helped boxing trump the likes of darts and golf, as there was … *ahem* … more action.

Thanks, Audley (who is blamed for killing boxing coverage on the BBC). Are you now trying to kill boxing in 3D before it's started?

My grandfather had but a radio in 1964 when Cassius Clay "shook up the world." It did the job, so do we need this technology? I say yes, and here's why. Watching Ricky Hatton's first US fight in 2006, the picture looked akin to an Internet stream, and I was sitting on the couch alone. But when Hatton faced Floyd Mayweather in 2007 with Sky pushing HD, everyone I knew was screaming at my HDTV at 4 a.m.

Annoyingly handsome David Haye said in his presser in 2010, "Don't forget your 3D glasses!" Suddenly, friends call asking if their girlfriends can come too. "Is it like 3D in the cinema?" Yes it is. But sport in 3D is more about depth of field rather than things jumping out at you.

If 3D can do for boxing in 2011 a fraction of what it has for cinema in 2010, it will be a welcome boost—three of the five highest grossing films in the UK were in 3D, including *Avatar*, which 90 percent of people saw

3D BOXING
UK fans sporting their 3D glasses

Real Thing

in 3D, crucially increasing cinema revenues by 8 percent.

All agreed the 3D boxing was mesmerizing, like you are part of the action on the apron. Aside from sitting ringside, there is no more immersive experience. Sky 3D is in pubs, and the cost of a 3DTV is comparable with most screens of the same size. The prospect of Pacquiao in 3D is palpable, maybe the next best thing to the real thing.

Is the future of boxing intrinsically linked to 3D? Maybe not, but it's refreshing that boxing looks to be front and center, riding the crest of the 3D wave. Moreover, according to my girlfriend, everyone looks cool in 3D glasses!

—Roy Khalil

STUDENTS FOR THE SWEET SCIENCE

At the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, senior Brandon Ortega, sophomore Nick Thompson, and junior Christopher Crumpler are on a three-man mission to build a boxing fanbase within the campus community, and, judging from their recent prefight party for Pacquiao-Margarito, they've been pretty successful.

Students gathered in a campus auditorium to watch some of the major moments from both fighters' careers. Pizzas were devoured, predictions were made, and Pacquiao and Margarito trivia questions were answered for prizes provided by Top Rank.

Ortega and Thompson have been fight fans since childhood, and, during their time at UCCS, they've founded an organization known as the Boxing Enthusiast Club, with Crumpler quickly signing on to become the club's most active member. The club organizes multiple events per semester, whether it's prefight parties like the one for Pacquiao-Margarito, viewings of all-time great fights such as Marvin Hagler-Thomas Hearns and Rafel Marquez-Israel Vazquez, or the club's first annual Fight Night video game tournament.

Both aspiring promoters, Ortega and Thompson have connected with Top Rank, Golden Boy, and Mayweather Promotions to provide posters, t-shirts, and DVDs for their prefight events, and, in just one year as an officially recognized campus organization, the Boxing Enthusiast Club has become one of the most popular clubs on the UCCS campus. They plan to put together other events in the future, such as university-sponsored pay-per-view nights and gatherings where students can learn about important aspects of the Sweet Science, such as the finer points of boxing strategy and scoring rounds. Soon enough, these college students will really be enlightened.

—Tony Friedhoff

BOXING ENTHUSIASTS
Charter member Nick Thompson and club president Brandon Ortega

The Revitalization Of Gleason's Gym

Gleason's Gym owner Bruce Silverglade has heard the talk about boxing being a dying sport, but he doesn't buy it.

"It's more popular than ever," Silverglade told THE RING recently. "It's cyclical. There are good times and bad times. There aren't a lot of great American fighters right now, but the gyms are loaded with people. Every gym in New York, whether a boxing gym or not, has a little boxing center. More and more people are involved than ever before."

Of course, Gleason's has changed with the times, for not all of its rings are dedicated to boxing. At one station, you might find some MMA hopefuls grappling around; at another, you might see 1970s WWE star Johnny Rodz coaching some youngsters to take the bumps of professional wrestling.

But it's not the addition of MMA or pro wrestling that has brought the greatest changes to the old Brooklyn gym.

"I'd say the women have brought more to it, in a positive way," said Silverglade. "When women started coming in during the 1990s, they saw it wasn't a dark, dingy place full of hoodlums. That encouraged more and more women to come here. Then businesswomen started to consider boxing as a workout."

Naturally, businessmen followed.

"Gyms couldn't survive without the local businesspeople coming in. We have over a thousand memberships, and only a small percentage are professional fighters training for fights."

TOUGH TRIO Iran Barkley, Mike Tyson, and Mark Breland attend a fundraiser at Gleason's

PHOTO BY LORENZO CERBISI

Not surprisingly, the rise of female boxing created some resistance among Gleason's old-timers.

"The traditionalists hated to see the women in there, but nowadays no one bats an eye," said Silverglade. The veteran trainers also realized it was better to start training the ladies than to sit around doing nothing. As Silverglade said of the women, "We need them for economic reasons."

Then, faster than you could say *Million Dollar Baby*, the women worked their way into the hearts of Gleason's trainers.

"The women really improved," said Silverglade. "Actually, the women train hard because they want to learn. They don't come here thinking they'll make millions of dollars. They like the challenge. They come in and say, 'Show me how to do this.' The guys come in, they're macho, and they think they already know how to fight. The women are dedicated; the men are a little lazy."

BOXING BOOKSHELF

More than six decades after the fact, can we fully understand the degree to which Joe Louis transcended boxing? Probably not, but Randy Roberts' new biography, *Joe Louis: Hard Times Man* does a superb job of quantifying the longtime heavyweight champ's accomplishments. Consider, for example, these telling numbers:

- Twenty-five. That's how many times Louis successfully defended the title. "Seven times more than the previous eight champions combined," writes Roberts, who's previously written bios of Jack Johnson and Jack Dempsey.
- Forty-three. This is the approximate total of songs written about Louis during his heyday. "No athlete," writes Roberts, "and probably no person since Jesus Christ, had inspired more recordings."
- Four-hundred thousand. That's the dollar-value of Louis' 1935 ring earnings. To put this into context, Roberts notes that Joe DiMaggio earned less than $40,000 in 1941.

As a young fighter in Detroit, Louis was an immediate winner, but his paydays were meager. And at the height of the Depression, he headed east. On a summer night in 1935, the 196-pound Louis fought for the first time in New York. He stopped 260-pound Primo Carnera in the sixth round. His victory, Roberts notes, made the 21-year old a hero to black Americans: "More than any man, any force, of the generation, Louis confirmed full black equality—even, some asserted, superiority." An African-American sportswriter dubbed him the "Brown Bomber," a moniker with a lot more dignity than some of the names conjured by white writers, such as "The Shufflin' Shadow" and "The Chocolate Cobra."

Max Schmeling handed Louis his first loss in 1936, but Louis won the title a year later. And in 1938, in a rematch cast as a battle of good (the American Louis) and evil (the German Schmeling, who "Had become excessively cozy with Nazi leadership," writes Roberts), Louis took care of business in a single round.

He defended his title so often, and with such ease, that Louis' challengers were said to be members of the "Bum Of The Month" club. "But," Roberts argues, "they were never bums. They were the best fighters in the heavyweight division. It was just that the gap between them and Joe was too wide to bridge."

Some versions of the Louis story dwell on his money troubles and the less-than-glamorous stint as a casino greeter that followed his fighting career. Ultimately, though, those are just footnotes to what Roberts calls "The American success story—up from poverty to the heights of a chosen profession, the leap from nothing to everything in the blink of an eye."

—Kevin Canfield

But the women mightn't have stayed if not for Gleason's genial atmosphere.

"Nobody has an attitude up here," Silverglade said. "It's very comfortable. I love my job because, when I meet people, they are always on their best behavior. Fighters who have bad reputations come here and act like perfect gentlemen.

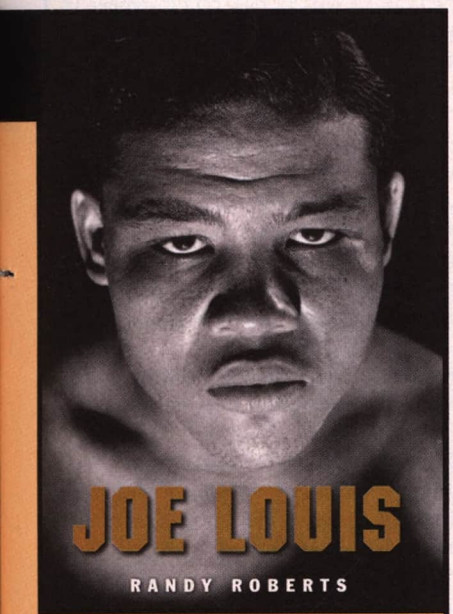
"And New York has so many ex-champions—Carlos Ortiz, Iran Barkley, Emile Griffith. They all like to come here and hang out. When Muhammad Ali is in New York and has to do a photo shoot, he always asks to do it here. Mike Tyson stopped by recently when he had an amateur card on Halloween. It's just a great place"

Gleason's space has also been used for charity fundraisers and was recently used as an art gallery, exhibiting works by local artists. A few years ago, Silverglade brought in classical musicians to play while some bouts were going on. Anything can happen at Gleason's.

As for the future of Gleason's Gym, Silverglade sees nothing but good things.

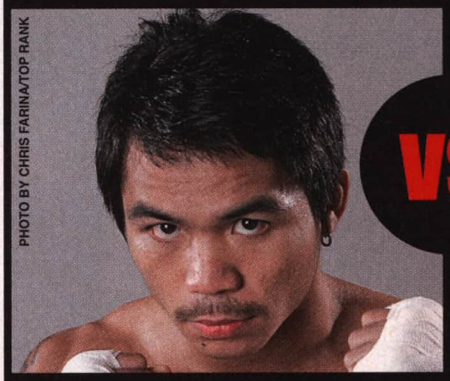
"I see boxing becoming more of a mainstream workout. People are amazed by the conditioning and stamina needed to be a fighter. As more people realize that it's a safe environment, we'll see more people coming in."

—Don Stradley



JOE LOUIS: HARD TIMES MAN
By Randy Roberts
Yale University Press, hardcover
328 pages, $27.50

TOP 10 REASONS



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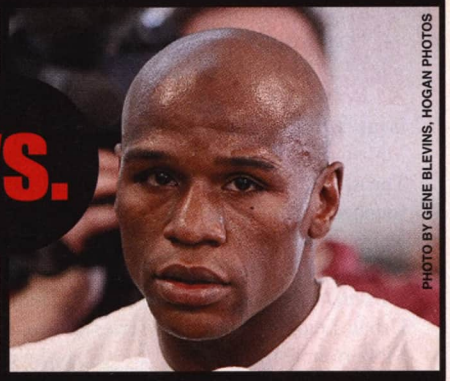


WILL HAPPEN IN 2011

1 Bob Arum only has enough money to buy up two-thirds of the world's natural resources, and how can you expect a guy to live on that?

2 We haven't yet gotten our fill of Floyd Mayweather on 24/7. When a celebrity is as warm and personable as he is, you just can't get enough.

3 Promoters have always wanted to know where the ceiling is on what the boxing consumer would pay to watch a fight on pay-per-view. $70? $100? $300? It's about time they found it, don't you think?

4 Because sooner or later Manny Pacquiao will get tired of negotiating a Middle East peace treaty, pulling babies from burning buildings, and ridding the Philippines of any trace of crime, poverty, and corruption.

5 Um … There's $100-million on the table. *Duh!*

6 There will be plenty of time for a good, long undercard, and uninteresting fights have to be made too, you know.

7 It'll be great fun watching the WBC scramble to come up with a name for the title at stake. They seem to like gemstones. They've already used diamond. How about the sapphire belt? Or the ruby? Better yet, the cubic zirconium!

8 It's been a little while since the general sports media has trotted out the dependable "fight to save boxing," or "boxing's last gasp" angle. They're due.

9 We simply can't go on allowing the UFC to steal the combat sport market by matching that guy, you know, the white guy with the short hair and the tattoos, against that other guy, you know who we're talking about, the white guy, his hair is short, and he's got tattoos. You know who we mean. Those guys. They rule.

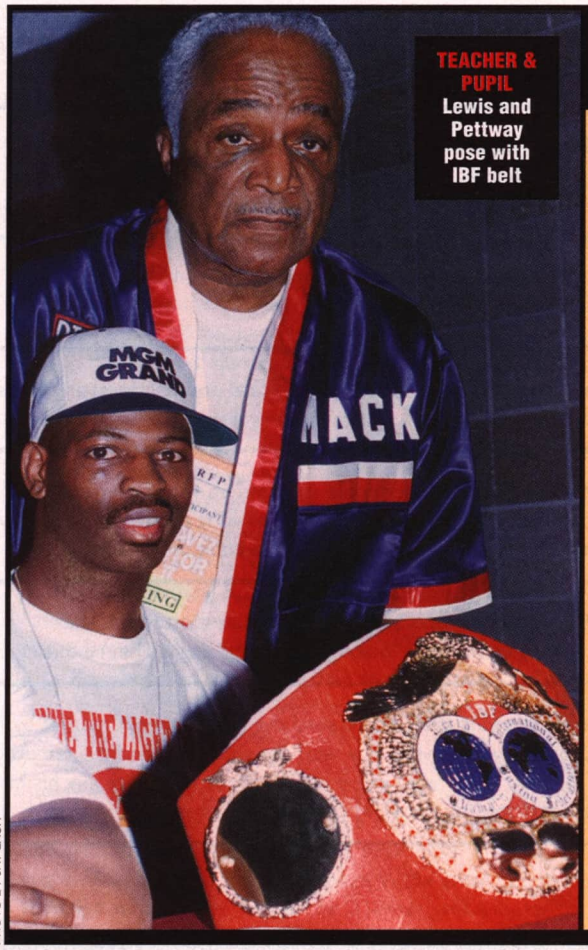
10 Um, $100 million. *Hello?*

Outside The Ropes

According to Las Vegas Walk of Stars spokesman **Pablo Castro Zavala**, former IBF and WBA junior middleweight titleholder **Fernando Vargas** is expected to become the first fighter with a star on the Las Vegas Walk of Stars … Actor and playwright **Roy Khalil**, who wrote this issue's item about 3D boxing on television, has written a play about **Muhammad Ali**, which is currently in development at the UK's Royal National Theatre … **Shane Mosley**'s $12-million defamation lawsuit against BALCO founder Victor Conte has been voluntarily dismissed … Former WBA middleweight and IBF light heavyweight titleholder **Reggie Johnson** has received a 12-year prison sentence on a felony theft charge according to the *Houston Chronicle*. He was convicted of taking more than $120,000 from Houston Area Urban League to put on a series of boxing camps that never took place … More trouble for **Floyd Mayweather**, who is already facing a number of felony charges stemming from a dispute with the mother of his children. In mid-November, he allegedly poked a security guard and threatened him over a parking violation. The Las Vegas police have submitted a misdemeanor battery report to Clark County district attorney for possible prosecution … British heavyweight **Derek Chisora** was found guilty of assaulting his former girlfriend. The judge imposed a 12-week prison sentence, which was suspended for two years. Chisora was also ordered to carry out 150 hours of community service and pay $2,400 in compensation … According to TMZ Sports, **RBM Group International** has filed a $10-million lawsuit against **Manny Pacquiao** in Los Angeles County Superior Court. RBM alleges that Pacquiao signed a contract in 2009 to record 12 songs and deposited RBM's $40,000 check but never recorded the songs.

NEW HONOR
Vargas to get star on Las Vegas Walk of Stars

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI



TEACHER & PUPIL
Lewis and Pettway pose with IBF belt

PHOTO BY JAY LASH

OBITUARY

Legendary Baltimore trainer **Mack Lewis**, 92, died on November 12 at the Good Samaritan Hospital. Born in Richmond, Virginia, he moved to Baltimore at the age of six. Lewis attended Douglas High School and Morgan State University, where he was a member of its 1940 undefeated championship football team.

Lewis began boxing at Fort Lee, Virginia, while serving in the Armed Forces during World War II, but an ear injury curtailed his boxing career.

More than 50 years ago, Lewis opened a gym on the corner of Eager and Broadway, where he trained thousands of boxers. But boxing wasn't all he taught, Lewis mentored the young men and counseled them on life.

"You come to my club, you won't hear no cursing," Lewis told writer Tom Scocca. "Everyone down there is disciplined. I am Mr. Mack, not Mack, in this gym."

"Mr. Mack wasn't necessarily a father figure. He was more like a godfather," said William Tank Hill, a welterweight who Lewis trained in the 1960s.

Among the better pros Lewis trained were heavyweight Larry Middleton, junior middleweight Alvin Anderson, and welter Vernon Mason. His only titleholder was Vincent Pettway, who knocked out Gianfranco Rosi in 1994 to win the IBF junior middleweight belt.

"He was a very disciplined man who showed me how to give and get respect," Pettway told *The Baltimore Sun*. "He would help everyone. But, when we'd leave, he would always say, 'You are on your own, son.'"

"Most importantly, at least to Mr. Mack, were the countless number of boxers that he kept on the straight and narrow," wrote Gary "Digital" Williams. "There are so many people in boxing in the Beltway area that owe their careers, and maybe their lives, to Mack Lewis."

"I think Floyd Mayweather would pot-shot Pacquiao and bust him up in between the four-to-five punches that Pacquiao throws and then set him up later on down the line."

—Bernard Hopkins, explaining why he thinks Floyd Mayweather would beat Manny Pacquiao

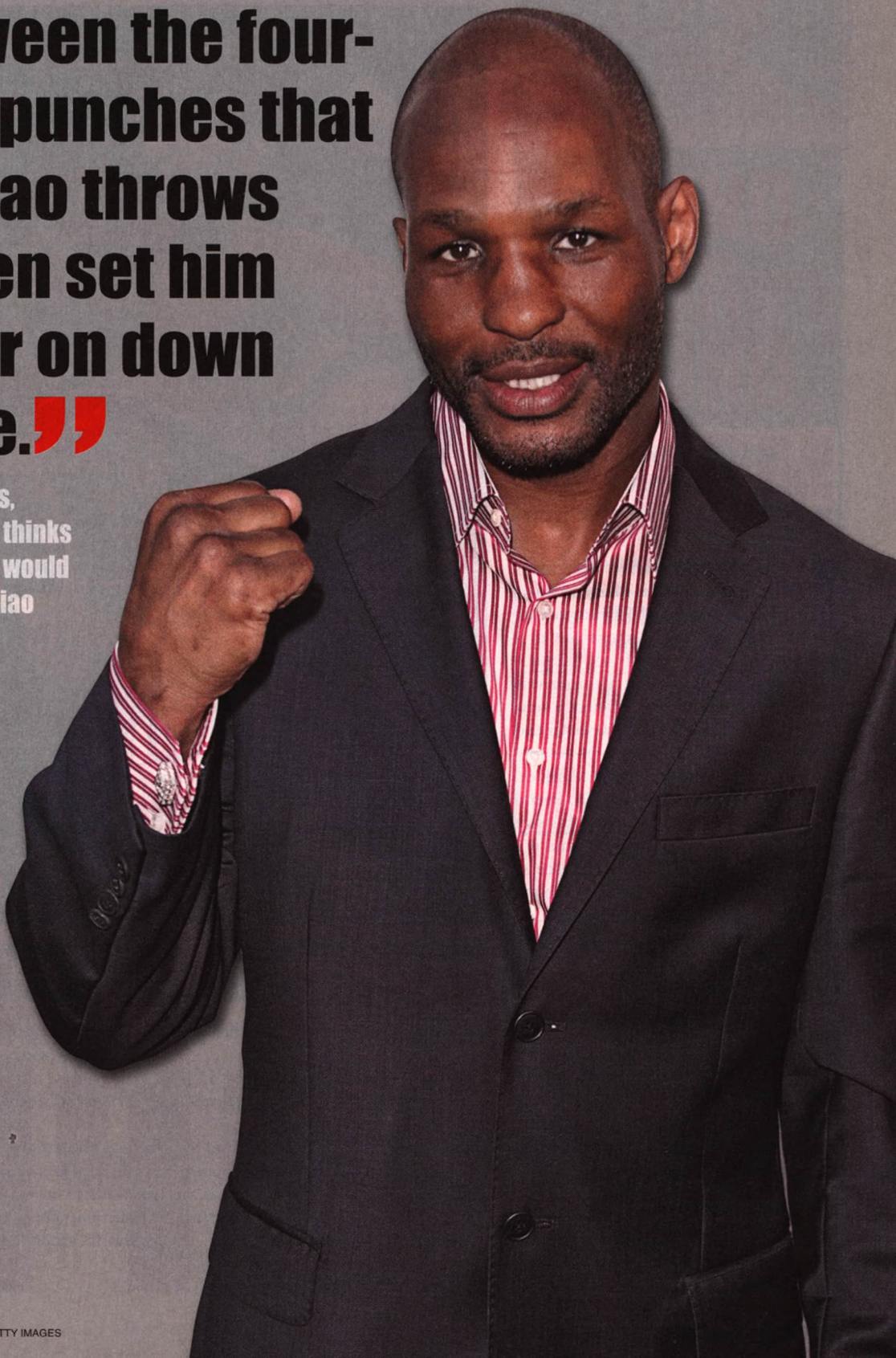


PHOTO BY ALEXANDER TAMARGO/GETTY IMAGES

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

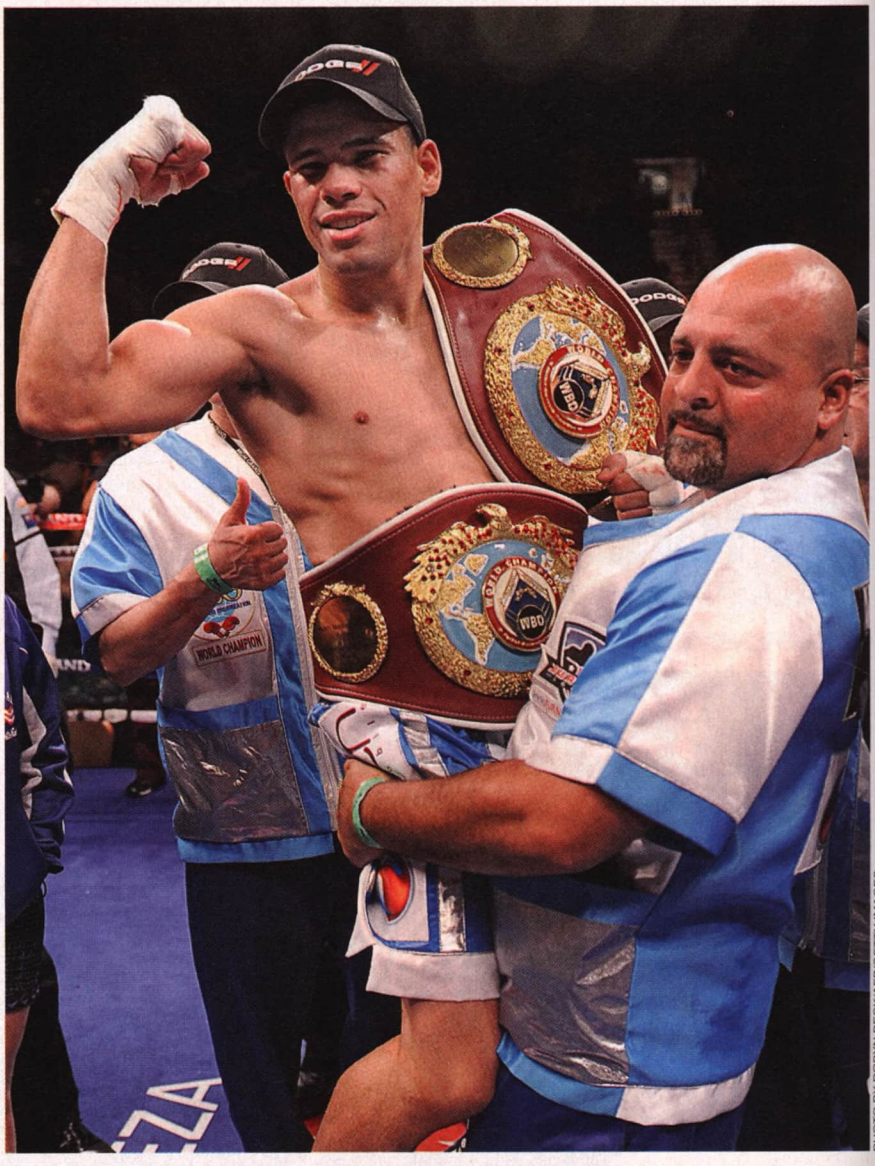


PHOTO BY ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ

It wasn't exactly a stunner that "Juan-Ma" overcame Rafael Marquez. Marquez, 35, was one division heavier than his best weight and shopworn to a degree from his wars with Israel Vazquez. Lopez' performance against Marquez was more confirmation than coronation, a verification of his status as a legit superstar and pound-for-pound contender.

It wasn't just that Lopez beat Marquez, it's how he went about doing it. The Puerto Rican southpaw could have used his size advantage to fight a safer fight, and it's highly likely he would have been successful. Instead, Lopez went straight into the fire and slugged it out with Marquez on the inside, determined to prove that he was tough enough to win the type of blood-and-guts battle that would seem to favor Marquez.

Lopez took chances. He took punches, including a bomb in the fourth round that left him holding on. But Lopez dominated. He punished the ever-determined Marquez throughout, the action becoming steadily more one-sided with each round until Marquez called it quits at the end of the eighth, citing a shoulder injury.

Lopez bolstered his position as an elite fighter and could win the vacant RING championship in a match with second-ranked Yuriorkis Gamboa.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

For Period Ended November 21, 2010

Heavyweights: No changes.

Cruiserweights: Zsolt Erdei (sixth last issue) exits because he's now fighting at light heavyweight. That enables everyone six and below to move up one notch and allows Guillermo Jones to return to the ratings at 10.

Light Heavyweights: No changes.

Super Middleweights: After knocking out Allan Green, Glen Johnson replaces Brian Magee at 10.

Middleweights: Paul Williams (second last issue) tumbles to four after his second-round knockout loss to defending world champion Sergio Martinez. The shift allows Kelly Pavlik (third last issue), who lost by decision to Martinez, to advance to two, and Sebastian Sylvester (fourth last issue) to jump to three.

Junior Middleweights: Sergio Martinez (first last issue) is now campaigning solely at 160. His departure allows all those rated two and below to move up one place each and makes room for Saul Alvarez to return at 10.

Welterweights: Manny Pacquiao (second last issue), based on his dominance of Antonio Margarito, trades places with inactive Floyd Mayweather (first last issue), who falls to second.

Junior Welterweights: No changes.

Lightweights: Robert Guerrero enters at 10, thanks to his victory over Vincente Escobedo. Upon further review of the lightweights, Anthony Peterson (eight last issue) exits, pushing up Urbano Antillon (ninth last issue) and Miguel Vazquez (10th last issue) one place each.

Junior Lightweights: No changes.

Featherweights: Juan Manuel Lopez (second last issue) moves to one after his TKO victory over ninth-rated Rafael Marquez. Yuriorkis Gamboa (third last issue) moves to two, while Chris John (first last issue) drops to three based on inactivity.

Junior Featherweights: Guillermo Rigondeaux debuts at five after beating Ricardo Cordoba (fifth last issue), who drops to six. Satoshi Honsono (eighth last issue) departs to fight at featherweight. The new order also features Takalani Ndlouvu coming in at seven due to his win over Jeff Mathebula (sixth last issue), who slips to seven. The movement drops Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. (seventh last issue) to eight.

Bantamweights: Vusi Malinga beat Michael Domingo (10th last issue), which results in Domingo's departure. Malcolm Tunacao, however, replaces Domingo because he has a better record against a higher range of opposition compared to Malinga.

Junior Bantamweights: No changes.

Flyweights: No changes.

Junior Flyweights: Gilberto Keb Baas enters at two thanks to his decision victory over Omar Nino (second last issue), who drops to three. Baas' inclusion forces down everyone rated three and below and pushes out Roman Gonzalez (10th last issue).

Strawweights: Kwanthai Sithmorseng's points win over Pigmy Kotietgym enables Sithmorseng to replace Wanheng Menayothin at 10.

Pound-for-Pound: Sergio Martinez (sixth last issue) leaps to three after his second-round kayo of Williams (fifth last issue), who exits. Juan Manuel Marquez (third last issue) and Nonito Donaire (fourth last issue) each fall one place, respectively, while Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (seventh last issue), Fernando Montiel (eighth last issue), Wladimir Klitschko (ninth last issue), and Tim Bradley (10th last issue) all advance one place. The shift makes room for featherweight Juan Manuel Lopez to debut at 10.

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

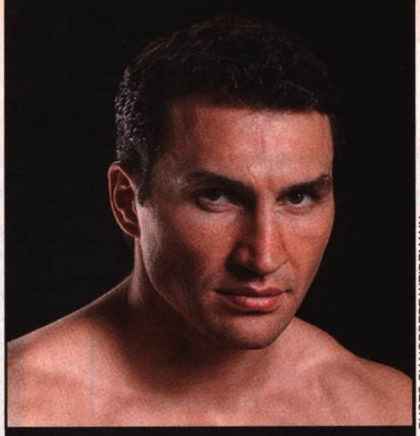


PHOTO BY NORBERT WEIDEMANN

POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** *Welterweight*
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** *Welterweight*
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** *Middleweight*
4. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** *Lightweight*
5. **NONITO DONAIRE** *Junior Bantamweight*
6. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** *Flyweight*
7. **FERNANDO MONTIEL** *Bantamweight*
8. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** *Heavyweight*
9. **TIM BRADLEY** *Junior Welterweight/ Welterweight*
10. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** *Featherweight*

The RING RATINGS

For Period Ended November 21, 2010

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to ringtv.com

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 55-3 (49)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 41-2 (38)
2. **DAVID HAYE**
England 25-1 (23)
3. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 20-0 (15)
4. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 42-1 (27)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 35-2 (18)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
8. **NICOLAY VALUEV**
Russia 50-2 (34)
9. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 30-1 (20)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 29-2 (25)

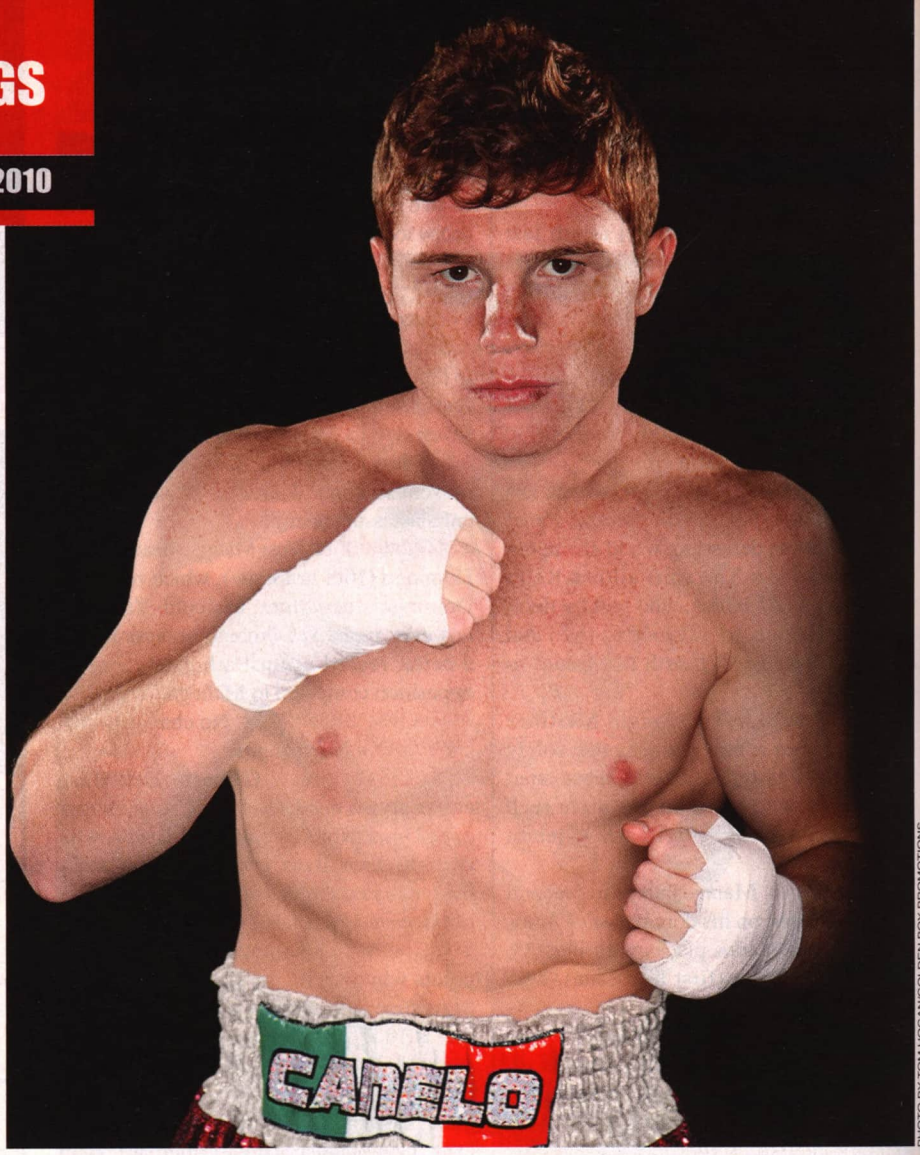


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

BACK IN THE PICTURE
Saul Alvarez jumps back into the junior middleweight ratings at 10

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 23-2 (12)
2. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 30-1 (23)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 44-2-1 (32)
4. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 24-2 (16)
5. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia 21-0 (16)
6. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 31-3 (27)
7. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 27-3-1 (11)
8. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 15-2-3 (6)
9. **PAWEL KOLODZIEJ**
Poland 27-0 (16)
10. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 37-3-2 (29)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: JEAN PASCAL
Haiti 26-1 (16)

1. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 29-1 (17)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
Tallahassee, FL 21-0 (18)
3. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
4. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 51-5-1 (32)
5. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
Wales 20-0 (10)
6. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 27-2 (15)
7. **KARO MURAT**
Iraq 22-1 (13)
8. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan 10-1 (6)
9. **CHRIS HENRY**
Houston, TX 25-2 (20)
10. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO**
Spain 20-3 (7)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 23-0 (13)
2. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 27-0 (22)
3. **CARL FROCH**
England 27-1 (21)
4. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 43-2 (32)
5. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
Flint, MI 19-1 (13)
6. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 28-5-2 (19)
7. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Germany 39-2 (23)
8. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 29-3 (22)
9. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
10. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 31-2 (25)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ
Argentina 46-2-2 (25)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 34-2-1 (14)
2. **KELLY PAVLIK**
Youngstown, OH 36-2 (32)
3. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 34-3-1 (16)
4. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 39-2 (27)
5. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 24-1 (15)
6. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
England 27-2 (19)
7. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany 30-0 (10)
8. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia 17-0 (14)
9. **DAVID LOPEZ**
Mexico 39-1(23)
10. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France 25-0 (17)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **KERMIT CINTRON**
   Reading, PA 32-3-1 (28)
2. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
   Mexico 19-1 (16)
3. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 35-2 (28)
4. **RYAN RHODES**
   England 44-4 (30)
5. **SECHEW POWELL**
   Brooklyn, NY 26-2 (15)
6. **YURI FOREMAN**
   Belarus 28-1 (8)
7. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
   Armenia 28-0 (17)
8. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
   Ukraine 37-0 (23)
9. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
   Detroit, MI 30-4 (18)
10. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
    Mexico 34-0-1 (26)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines 52-3-2 (38)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 41-0 (25)
3. **ANDRE BERTO**
   Winter Haven, FL 27-0 (21)
4. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 35-2 (28)
5. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 46-6-1 (39)
6. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
   Ghana 35-4 (20)
7. **JAN ZAVECK**
   Slovenia 30-1 (17)
8. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
   Ukraine 31-0 (20)
9. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ**
   Poland 36-9-1 (18)
10. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
    Palm Springs, CA 26-0 (11)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 26-0 (11)
2. **AMIR KHAN**
   England 23-1 (17)
3. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
   St. Louis, MO 21-0 (13)
4. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
   Argentina 29-1 (27)
5. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
   Ukraine 31-4-1 (13)
6. **JUAN URANGO**
   Colombia 22-3-1 (17)
7. **KAIZER MABUZA**
   South Africa 23-6-3 (14)
8. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI**
   Brooklyn, NY 27-4 (5)
9. **LAMONT PETERSON**
   Washington, D.C. 28-1 (14)
10. **PAUL MCCLOSKEY**
    England 22-0 (12)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 52-5-1 (38)

1. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
   Venezuela 27-8-2 (21)
2. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
   Mexico 53-7-2 (32)
3. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
   Australia 27-3 (22)
4. **ALI FUNEKA**
   South Africa 30-3-3 (25)
5. **BRANDON RIOS**
   Lubbock, TX 26-0-1 (19)
6. **JOHN MURRAY**
   England 30-0 (18)
7. **PAULUS MOSES**
   Namibia 25-1 (17)
8. **URBANO ANTILLON**
   Mexico 28-1 (20)
9. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
   Mexico 27-3 (12)
10. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
    Gilroy, CA 28-1-1 (18)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MZONKE FANA**
   South Africa 30-4 (12)
2. **RICKY BURNS**
   Scotland 29-2 (7)
3. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
   Puerto Rico 24-1-1 (15)
4. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
   Japan 16-0 (13)
5. **JORGE SOLIS**
   Mexico 40-2-2 (29)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
   Mexico 22-1-1 (16)
7. **JORGE LINARES**
   Venezuela 30-1 (19)
8. **TAKAHIRO AO**
   Japan 20-2-1 (9)
9. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
   Dominican Republic 17-1 (9)
10. **JASON LITZAU**
    St. Paul, MN 28-2 (21)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
   Puerto Rico 30-0 (27)
2. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
   Cuba 19-0 (15)
3. **CHRIS JOHN**
   Indonesia 43-0-2 (22)
4. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 34-11-2 (22)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
   Mexico 40-2 (33)
6. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
   Mexico 39-12-2 (23)
7. **ELIO ROJAS**
   Dominican Republic 22-1 (13)
8. **BERNABE CONCEPCION**
   Philippines 28-4-1 (15)
9. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 39-6 (35)
10. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
    Japan 29-3 (12)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
   Japan 37-4-3 (23)
2. **ROY LI LEE**
   Japan 17-1-1 (8)
3. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
   Thailand 41-2 (29)
4. **STEVE MOLITOR**
   Canada 33-1 (12)
5. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
   Cuba 7-0 (5)
6. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
   Panama 37-3-2 (23)
7. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
   South Africa 31-6 (18)
8. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
   South Africa 24-3-2 (14)
9. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
   Puerto Rico 20-0-1 (17)
10. **RENDALL MUNROE**
    England 21-2 (9)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 43-2-2 (33)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama 30-1-1 (10)
3. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia 20-0-1 (14)
4. **ABNER MARES**
   Mexico 20-0-1 (13)
5. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana 27-2 (22)
6. **NEHOMAR CERMENO**
   Venezuela 19-2 (11)
7. **SASHA BAKHTIN**
   Russia 25-0 (11)
8. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 42-2 (21)
9. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Japan 27-2-3 (16)
10. **VOLODYMYR SYDORENKO**
    Ukraine 22-2-2 (7)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia 35-2-1 (27)
2. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico 33-6-2 (24)
3. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan 14-2-1 (9)
4. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines 24-1 (16)
5. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico 34-12-1 (23)
6. **KOHEI KONO**
   Japan 25-5 (9)
7. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
   Philippines 19-0-1 (15)
8. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 32-0-2 (19)
9. **JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS**
   Mexico 32-5 (26)
10. **CESAR SEDA**
    Puerto Rico 19-0 (14)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
Thailand 77-3-1 (41)

1. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 23-1 (15)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO**
   Japan 36-3-3 (23)
3. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 18-2 (11)
4. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama 22-1 (17)
5. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
   Japan 36-6-2 (17)
6. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
   Thailand 50-3-1 (20)
7. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   South Africa 26-2 (17)
8. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
   Mexico 34-5-1 (27)
9. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines 28-6-2 (18)
10. **MILAN MELINDO**
    Philippines 23-0 (7)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: GIOVANI SEGURA
Mexico 26-1-1 (22)

1. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 34-1-1 (6)
2. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
   Mexico 34-20-4 (21)
3. **OMAR NINO**
   Mexico 30-4-2 (12)
4. **RODEL MAYOL**
   Philippines 27-5-2 (21)
5. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE**
   Argentina 48-9-1 (18)
6. **CARLOS TAMARA**
   Colombia 21-6 (15)
7. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   Waipahu, HI 28-3 (16)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 32-2-2 (21)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina 25-1 (15)
10. **RAMON HIRALES**
    Mexico 14-1-1 (8)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   South Africa 21-0 (15)
2. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand 34-0-1 (12)
3. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico 29-1-1 (17)
4. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines 27-1-3 (15)
5. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines 23-5-1 (20)
6. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua 26-3 (21)
7. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines 25-4-6 (15)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan 23-4 (9)
9. **MICHAEL LANDERO**
   Philippines 14-4-4 (4)
10. **KWANTHAI SITHMORSENG**
    Thailand 31-0-1 (17)

Sloppy Joes ... And Shanes, 'Vanders, And Roys

In the final days that led up to the fourth and, hopefully, final marathon that I'll ever compete in, one thought kept running through my head as relentlessly as a pack of Kenyans going stride-for-stride with a bunch of Ethiopians at the 20k mark. It had nothing to do with game plans or race-day logistics, last-minute nutrition reminders, or confidence-boosting mind tricks. Nope, it was merely my simple hope that my days of marathoning wouldn't end in sloppy fashion.

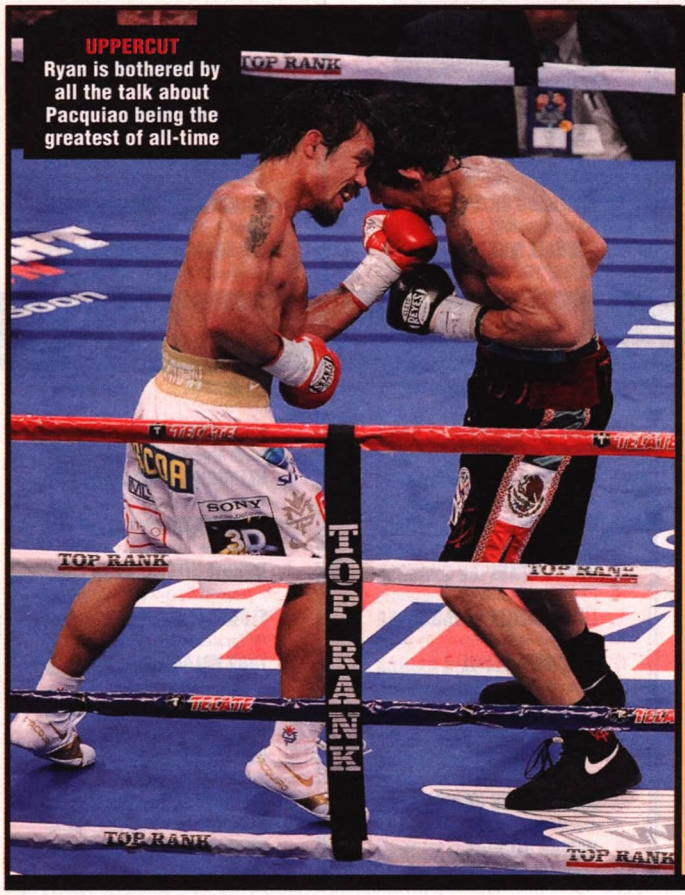
Sloppy, in my case, would mean anything from having the bottom of my shoe detach, to slipping on a crushed Gatorade cup at Mile 16 and sprawling in the street to an injury that would force me to the sideline long before the finish line. Being a perfectionist Virgo (actually, that's redundant) has long made me intolerant of *anything* that's sloppy—be it an untucked shirt, a living room full of clutter, or anything that messes up what could be a tidy ending to a great sports story.

Too many of those messed-up endings to great sports stories, sad to say, unfold in boxing. Because there is no regular-season schedule and boxers have the ability to end their campaigns whenever they'd like, you'd think that there would be more tidy conclusions to great fighters' careers. After all, doesn't everyone want to go out on top with a neat bow wrapped around the gift they've given the world in the form of a Hall of Fame body of work? Uh, apparently not.

Fresh off his bombardment of Antonio Margarito, Manny Pacquiao said he'd like to fight just two more times and then wave goodbye. Let's hope he's telling the truth. The odds are, though, that Pacquiao will instead stick around until he tarnishes his accomplishments by losing (or, worse, being completely annihilated) by someone who wouldn't have been able to beat him with a bazooka when the Filipino was in his prime.

The sports world is full of examples of athletes who've never known when enough was enough if that meant preserving a picturesque ending. After a literally perfect Olympic performance in 1976, gymnast Nadia Comaneci had to come back again four years later and, though she won more gold, didn't replicate the success of her first time around. Cyclist Lance Armstrong won the Tour de France a record seven straight times between 1999 and 2005, then retuned in 2009 and placed third. Okay, a bit of tarnish there, but Armstrong could have walked away after that with minimal damage. Instead, he chose to return again in 2010 and finish ... 23rd!

A 36-year-old Muhammad Ali should have tied the bow around his career after winning his storybook rematch with Leon Spinks. Instead he came back to get battered by Larry Holmes and outpointed by Trevor Berbick. Roberto Duran hung around long enough to accumulate 16 defeats (a few of them to the likes of Pat Lawlor, William Joppy, Vinny Pazienza, and Omar Eduardo



UPPERCUT
Ryan is bothered by all the talk about Pacquiao being the greatest of all-time

PHOTO BY ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

GRATING CONVERSATION

Pacquiao was brilliant, as usual, against Margarito. But those folks that are calling "Pac Man" the greatest fighter ever should be pointed toward the cold showers. Sugar Ray Robinson was before my time, but Ali and Leonard weren't. And Pacquiao isn't as good as "The Greatest" or "His Sweetness." So the argument ceases right there. We don't even have to go all the way back to Mr. Walker Smith Jr.

To me, Pacquiao is no Ali because he didn't lose three-plus years of his prime, return from exile to recapture his title despite diminished skills, and beat seven future Hall of Famers without the benefit of any kind of body attack. Nor has Pacquiao ever defeated the equivalent of Sonny Liston and George Foreman as an *underdog*.

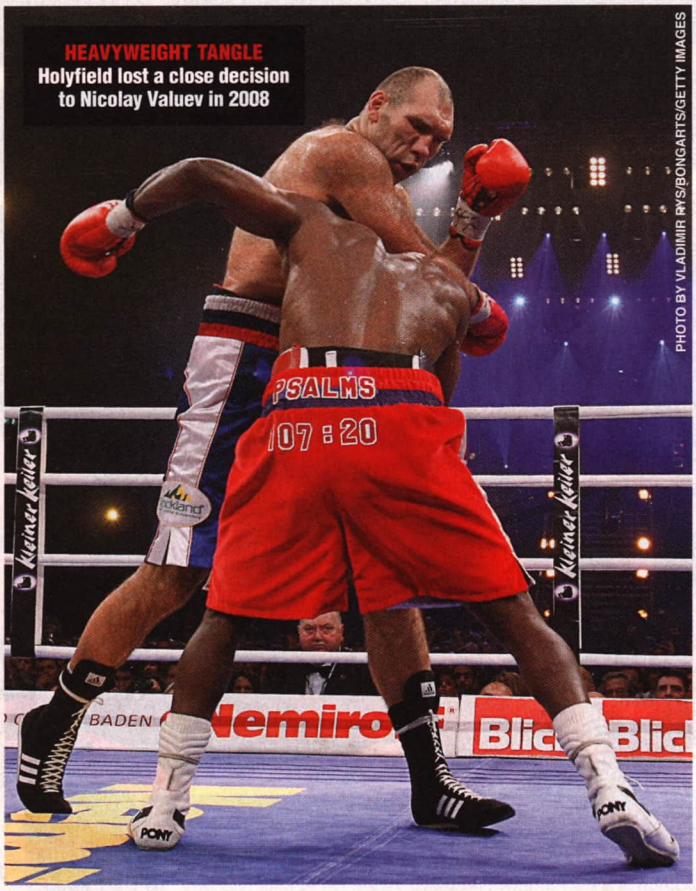
On my list, Pacquiao ranks behind Leonard because avenging a defeat to Erik Morales isn't like avenging a loss to Duran. Pacquiao has never had to overcome a situation as desperate as Leonard's shuteye against Thomas Hearns. And Pac Man never suffered what was thought to be a career-ending injury, then come out of retirement to upset the sport's best pound-for-pound fighter, as Leonard did in shocking Hagler.

Can't we just say that Pacquiao is *one* of the best ever and leave it at that? For goodness sake, one of those talking heads recently telling us Pacquiao might be the finest to ever bite down on a mouthpiece was none other than HBO's Max Kellerman. Yep, the same Mad Max who once said the exact same thing about Roy Jones.

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

WAVE GOODBYE
Let's hope Pacquiao meant what he said

Gonzalez), even though his record once stood at 72-1. Then there's Sugar Ray Leonard. You want a perfect ending? That would have been Leonard retiring for good after he upset Marvin Hagler. Which, of course, didn't happen. Sugar fought five more times, went 2-2-1 and was thrashed by Terry Norris and Hector Camacho. It was truly embarrassing, if not downright humbling.



HEAVYWEIGHT TANGLE
Holyfield lost a close decision to Nicolay Valuev in 2008

PHOTO BY VLADIMIR RYS/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Among today's greats, the same sloppiness is evident. Roy Jones should have retired after being knocked out twice in 2004, but he boogies on, and is 5-4 since. Among the defeats have been a humiliating first-round kayo defeat to Danny Green and a rematch points loss to Hopkins that cost Jones lifetime bragging rights over his rival.

Evander Holyfield's perfect time to exit would have been after winning the vacant WBA heavyweight crown against John Ruiz in 2000. But the fight game's most stubborn old man soldiers on, and has gone an ugly 6-6-1 since. And Shane Mosley is getting mighty sloppy down his homestretch too, following his surprising stoppage of Margarito with a one-sided decision loss to Floyd Mayweather and a draw with the inferior Sergio Mora.

As we went to press, Bernard Hopkins was set to meet Jean Pascal in Quebec City. It's a bout that, win or lose, "B-Hop" shouldn't be taking. If he wanted perfect closure, he could have given his farewell address after beating Jones in April and avenging what had been a haunting blemish on his record. Instead, Hopkins is back for more. And no matter what he says, you can be sure that he won't officially retire until he loses once or maybe even twice, more.

Yeah, we the spectators, reporters, historians, and fans want to see perfect endings. But, ironically, the athletes whose reputations are at stake, don't care about that sort of stuff as much as we do. To them, money, headlines, or the chance to hear the cheers one more time (or many more times) is more important than keeping tarnish off their hardware.

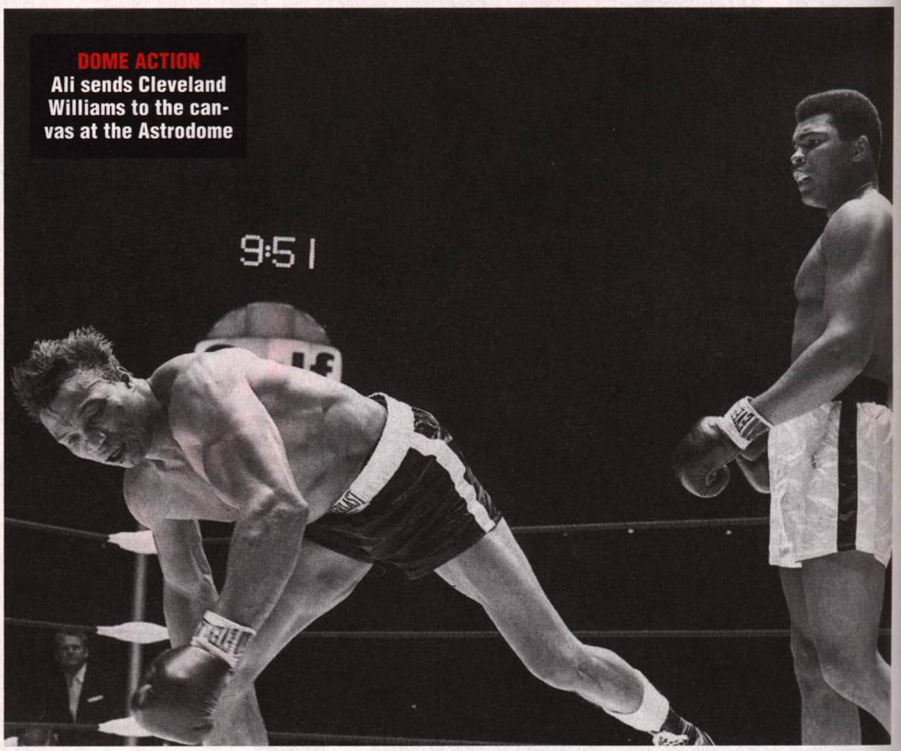
Ted Williams hit a home run in his final at-bat. Pete Sampras walked away after winning the US Open. Rocky Marciano retired undefeated. Maybe the reason so many fighters don't care about those kinds of perfect endings is because they don't want any kind of ending at all.

Astrodoom?

The future of the "Eighth Wonder of the World," Houston's famed Astrodome, is uncertain as you read this. But one of the options being seriously considered by city officials is, you guessed it, demolition. And that would mean another entry on the ever-growing list of historic boxing venues that have kissed the wrecking ball in the last decade or so, many of them chronicled in this column.

The former home of the Houston Astros and Oilers doesn't exactly rival Yankee Stadium for big fights, but it did play host to four Ali bouts that garnered plenty of attention, vs. Cleveland Williams, Ernie Terrell, Jimmy Ellis, and Buster Mathis. It hosted a 1981 doubleheader that co-featured Leonard's knockout of Ayub Kalule and Hearns' stoppage of Pablo Baez, as well as Salvador Sanchez' 1983 split decision over Pat Cowdell. And the Dome was the setting for Holmes' '83 battering of Tex Cobb, the mismatch that forced Howard Cosell to swear off pro boxing.

Raise the roof, fellas. Don't raze the roof.



DOME ACTION
Ali sends Cleveland Williams to the canvas at the Astrodome

PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS

The last word on everything from a Pac mentality to a trip through the Buffer zone:

PAY-PER-VIEW PERIL
Jones sure didn't look like the next great Philly fighter against Soto-Karass

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

• There are probably a whole lot of Dallas Cowboys fans who wish Pacquiao (who's now 2-0 in Cowboys Stadium) would make his permanent home in Arlington, Texas, and the football team would relocate to the Philippines.

• It's fitting that Margarito trained for the bout by chopping wood because he sure was taken to the woodshed on fight night. By the way, someone should have told the Mexican that it's awfully difficult to sneak mulch into your handwraps.

• This time it wasn't Margarito's mitts that were plastered, it was his face.

• If he watched or heard about this latest beating that Pacquiao dished out, Mayweather may be harder to locate than Osama Bin Laden in the months ahead.

• In what was supposed to be his pay-per-view coming out party against Jesus Soto-Karass, Mike Jones left a lot of us wondering what all the shouting has been about. He sure doesn't look like Philadelphia's next great fighter, at least not yet.

• After dispatching Audley Harrison with ease, David Haye started talking about challenging the Klitschkos again. Zzzz. We know how things turned out the last time Haye puffed out his chest and the promoters tried to make those matchups, so here's a better idea: Haye vs. Tomasz Adamek. Who wouldn't pay big bucks to see that one?

• My cable company, Time Warner, recently took ESPN Classic off basic cable and added it to a more expensive sports package. I, in turn, extended my middle digit and, like a ringside physician speaking to a just-kayoed boxer, asked the greedy bastards to tell me how many fingers I was holding up.

Now, get this: On a Friday night in November, ESPN Classic aired six consecutive old fight telecasts. One was Kostya Tszyu-Jesse James Leija. Okay, not bad. The others, however, were Chris McInerney-Anterio Vines, Silverio Ortiz-Daniel Seda, Vinny Madalone-Shannon Miller, Calvin Brock-Jameel McCline, and Mike Anchondo-Jorge Barrios. This on a cable outlet that used to feature everything from Robinson-LaMotta and Louis-Schmeling to Ali-Foreman and Douglas-Tyson. Lower the quality and raise the price. What a great idea for creating happy customers.

• Despite its problems, Showtime's "Super Six" tournament was a great idea. In the future, though, a freight-train load of problems could be avoided if boxing tournaments all stick to a single-elimination format.

• Ring announcer Michael Buffer turned up at MSG for the New York Knicks' home opener and bellowed over the p.a. system, "Let's get ready for roundball!" Heaven help us. As if Buffer's tiresome, look-at-me shtick isn't bad enough in the Sweet Science, he's become adept at causing earaches in other sports as well. Hey, Mike, let's get ready to retire, eh?

Above It All

Did you see the blueprints for the Madison Square Garden renovations? They're dazzling. The start of the work, which was scheduled for last summer, has been pushed to the summer of 2011. The building will basically be gutted, with only the outside shell and the famous ceiling remaining intact. And the new arena will actually have a catwalk above the floor so that fans can look down on the action. Imagine watching a fight from *above* ring center. Talk about a unique vantage point. ■

DIGGING DEEP

by Ivan Goldman

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGE

PAYBACK
This is what Pacquiao's fists did to Margarito's face.

Team Margarito's Disease-gate Fades To Dust

The image of Antonio Margarito, his sidekick Brandon Rios, and trainer Robert Garcia poking fun at Freddie Roach's Parkinson's disease took a long time to fade from public memory. Two days at least. The image was replaced by one of Margarito's face hammered into marbled sirloin by Pacquiao's lightning fists, but that didn't last long either.

The world spins faster these days. People have the attention span of potted plants. Does anyone remember Balloon Boy? The public gets pulled along on a leash by the fear-and-stupidity-mongers manipulating the new, improved 24-hour news cycle: Will 12-pound frogs drop all over Phoenix? Find out after these brief messages. And that stuff we told you yesterday? Get over it. Yesterday was a million years ago.

Anyway, as the world marveled over yet another stunning victory by the crossover star boxing had prayed for, some of us were still stuck with the ghastly memory of Margarito and Rios mimicking Parkinson's tremors, and I'm left wondering what's next on their agenda? Throwing a stink bomb into a cancer ward? Before his hookup with Plaster-Master, Garcia carried himself like a gentleman. But when you snuggle up with dogs, fleas may result.

Trash-tongued Rios showed all the class and character of a purse-snatcher, and, as for Margarito, I haven't been terribly fond of him ever since they fished plaster loads out of his wraps a couple years ago. Still, I doubt he spends much of his time making fun of people with serious illnesses. His camp's unholy resentment for Team Pacquiao just boiled over.

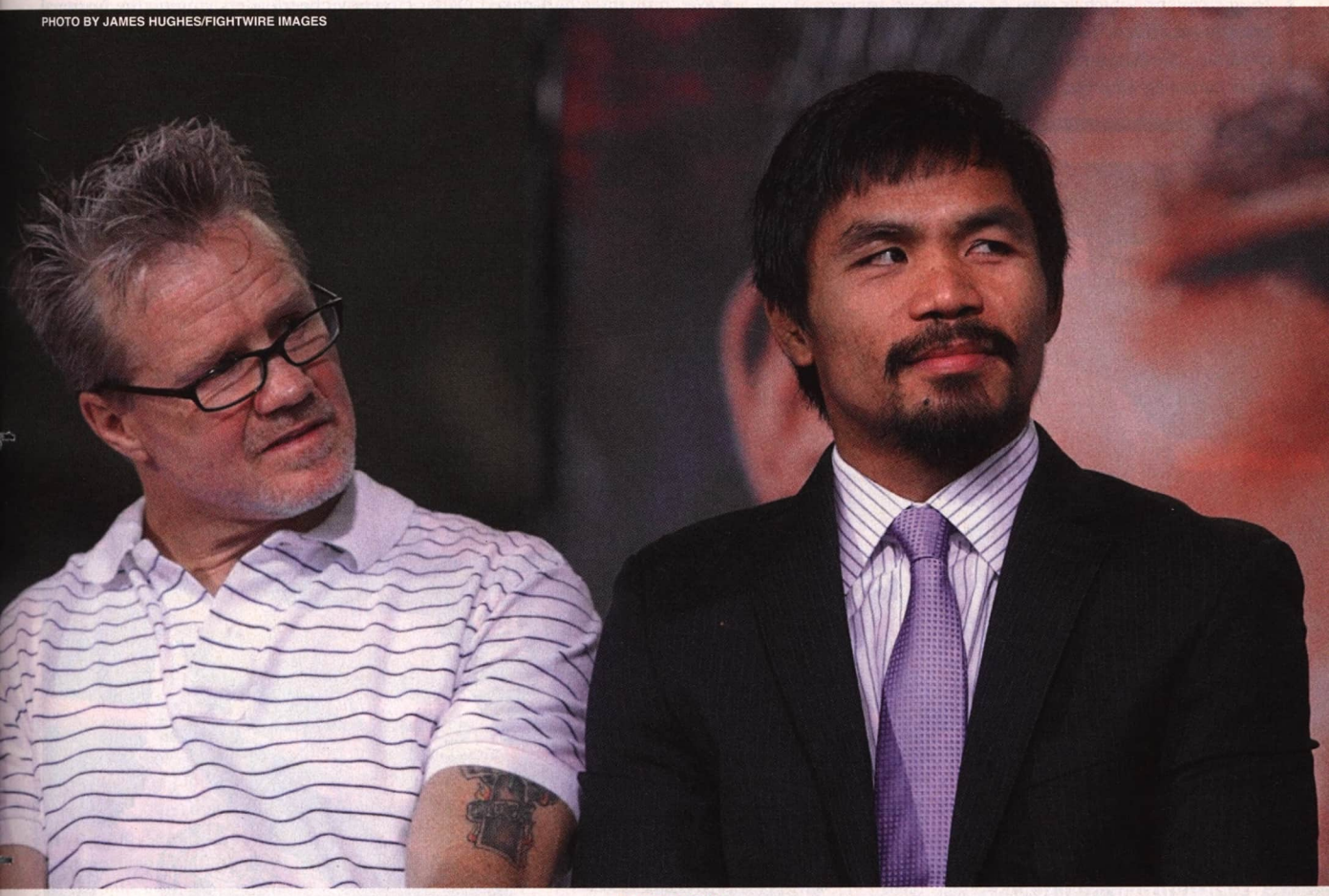
Pac-Man, the boxing congressman, is such a huge media presence that Margarito, sharing a piece of that ultra-strength spotlight, was categorized over and over as a sinister bully unable to shake the handwraps scandal. It was a natural story that saturated all of North America, the Philippines, and places beyond. Good guy versus villain, and it wasn't terribly difficult to figure out who was who.

Pacquiao opponents have almost as tough a time before the bout as they do while he's beating them up. But it's even tougher when you're cast as a vicious cheat and a jerk and, despite all your bravado, you have a sneaking suspicion deep in your gut that there's no way to beat this man.

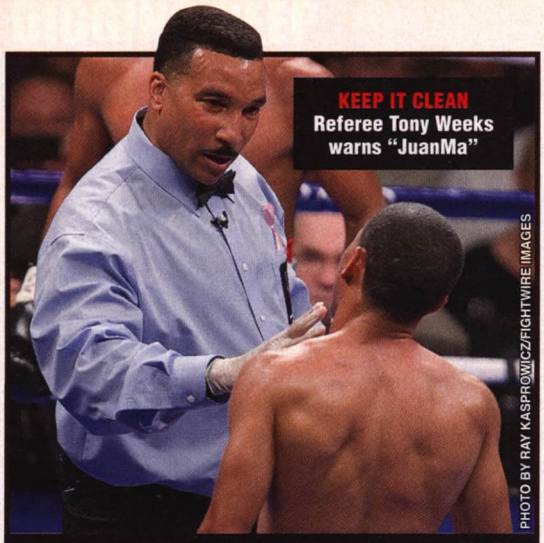
Roach admitted he lost sleep over the hideous, prefight jibes aimed at his illness, and, when the sweet members of Team Marga-sleazo muttered their half-apologies, mostly they just repeated their mantra that the opposing team was nervous and scared. Clearly Plaster-man was upset that the world was picking on him again.

Once again, a few boxing people, who have nothing like a baseball or NFL commission to keep them in line, went off the rails. Even if the state commissions wanted to look into what they did, who'd have jurisdiction? Disease-gate was taped at Garcia's California gym before a fight in Texas.

PHOTO BY JAMES HUGHES/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES



NOT FUNNNY
Neither Roach nor Pacquiao appreciated Team Margarito's cruel jokes



KEEP IT CLEAN
Referee Tony Weeks warns "JuanMa"

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

JUANMA'S LOST POINT

Referee Tony Weeks had his hands full in this one because both fighters inflicted persistent fouls so fast they were very difficult to spot. Juan Manuel Lopez landed behind the head, and Rafael Marquez favored hitting on the break. Cagey veteran Marquez used those split seconds of opportunity when Weeks' head was turned. The less experienced Lopez tended to get caught, which is why he ended up losing a point in round four. Yes, JuanMa's a terrific fighter and great fun to watch, but let's face it—he beat an opponent two weight classes beneath him.

Texas Overflow

• The biggest beneficiary from the aforementioned tape may have been Floyd Mayweather. His own Internet diatribe against Pacquiao doesn't look quite so disgusting anymore.

• Prior to the extravaganza, friend and colleague William Dettloff predicted in his RingTV.com column that a Margarito victory would be good for boxing because of the rematch and all. Now, dear reader, please skip the rest of this paragraph because it's a personal message I want only Dettloff to see: *For God's sake, get yourself some rest and electroshock therapy. I only say this because I care.*

• What did we get from Pacquiao after his magnificent victory? Just more decency and candor. Yes, he admitted, it reached the point where he didn't want to pound that eye anymore. Yes, Margarito was tough and hurt him more than once. No venom, no trash. Just straightforward truth. Wish I had a congressman like him.

• Remember those crushing uppercuts Margarito landed from time to time? Much smaller Manny shook them off, but now imagine those same shots assisted by plaster of Paris.

• It wasn't that long ago that James Toney got more attention from the gym rats in Roach's Wild Card gym than Pacquiao. Funny what a string of spectacular victories can do.

• I won't write him off after one lackluster showing, but the much-publicized and adored Guillermo Rigondeaux on the undercard looked like yet another Cuban defector who's an athlete, yes. But a fighter? No. Remember the previous week when Juan Manuel Lopez, clearly hurt by Rafael Marquez, pounded his gloves together in let-me-at-him fury? *That's* a fighter.

• Watching three half-naked Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders singing the National Anthem in lovely harmony, I couldn't help thinking how proud the Founding Fathers would be.

CAUTIOUS CUBAN
Is Rigondeaux more athlete than fighter?

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

MAGOOS

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

DISTORTED SCORE
Williams didn't think Escobedo won a single round!

Magoo One

Trainer Robert Garcia and referee Laurence Cole can share this one. When an outclassed fighter's staggered through 12 unforgiving rounds, his face is ruined, and he can barely see, what are you waiting for? Stop the fight.

Magoo Two

To judge Sergio Caiz, who saw it for split-decision winner Mike Jones over Jesus Soto-Karass 97-93 in Cowboys Stadium. Only *three rounds* to Soto-Karass? A club fighter who rose to the occasion, gave Jones fits, and may have beaten him deserves more credit than that. Sergio Caiz is the son of well-connected California referee/judge Raul Caiz Sr., who at last count, had three of his offspring in the officiating business.

I've written about Sergio before. He's the judge who, for his very first assignment was flown, all expenses paid, to Japan for a WBA championship match in Japan in January 2008. The WBA blatantly admitted he got jumped ahead because of his family. He's Arizona-licensed and lives in California. I'd never seen him judge a fight before. Now I have. He stunk.

California's resurrected Governor Jerry Brown has told a well-placed source that he'd like to remove the athletic commission from the Department of Consumer Affairs, where it's functioned like a deflated speedbag. If it happens, it would be nice if someone checked out the Caizes and other dynasties that pass down these boxing jobs like the family silver.

Magoo Three

Eugenia Williams scored every single round for Robert Guerrero over Vicente Escobedo in their back-and-forth lightweight bout. New Jersey, which licenses the blundering Williams, has to have the worst commission west of Tajikistan. A real Vault of Horror, worse than Texas even. Guerrero had scored two knockdowns and clearly deserved victory. So why not give Escobedo the rounds he earned? Apparently, she saw a fighter winning, and her pencil just coasted from there regardless of what occurred later. But whatever goes on in her mind, it should happen somewhere away from a boxing ring.

Magoo Four

The New Jersey commission. If it were a flock of geese, it would fly north for the winter.

Super Tourney

Lucian Bute's contract with Showtime was precisely the medicine the network needed to lift its "Super Six" tournament up from the canvas after Mikkel Kessler, Andre Dirrell, and Jermain Taylor all dropped out due to unavoidable complications. Word is that Bute's people drove a tough, tough bargain. Bute, the only top super middleweight not in the tournament, became in essence the owner of a tiny patch of real estate a big developer needed to complete a majestic project. Well, as Woody Allen once said, money is good, if only for financial reasons.

Angulo's Papers

To many Americans, undocumented workers are an abstract concept, and the idea of kicking them out of the country doesn't seem so harsh. But the picture changes when you can put a human face on it. For boxing fans, that face can now be fierce junior middleweight slugger Afredo Angulo, a Mexicali native who lives with his family in Los Angeles, apparently without the legal right to do so.

Angulo and his promoter Gary Shaw are working on the problem with Frank Ronzio, a Los Angeles lawyer who specializes in immigration issues and has, from time to time, managed fighters. Lots of accusations and suppositions are floating around, but apparently the big networks, seeing a touchy political environment, have quietly decided to exclude Angulo from their shows even if he fights in Mexico, which makes no sense. If Ronzio and Shaw can arrange for "El Perro" to participate legally, why blackball him? Meanwhile, the Angulo issue put more heat under a simmering free-for-all among promoters, with Shaw claiming that one of his rivals dropped a dime on his fighter. ■

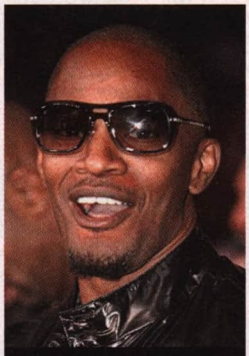
Ivan Goldman can be contacted at ivangoldman@yahoo.com.

AT THE FIGHTS

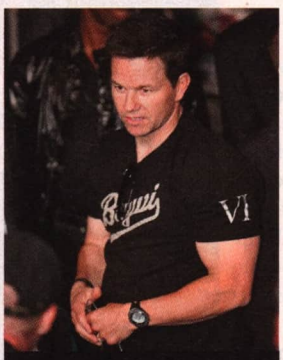
WANT TO SEE YOURSELF IN THE RING MAGAZINE?

Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will consider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to celebrityphotos@sepublications.com. Make sure to include your name(s), the celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!

Oscar De La Hoya, Baby Bash, and will.i.am at Fight Night Club

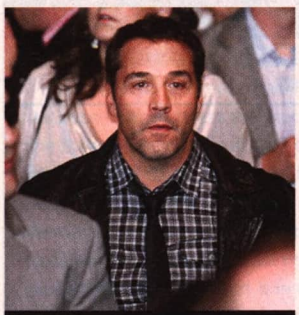


Jamie Foxx at Mayweather-Mosley

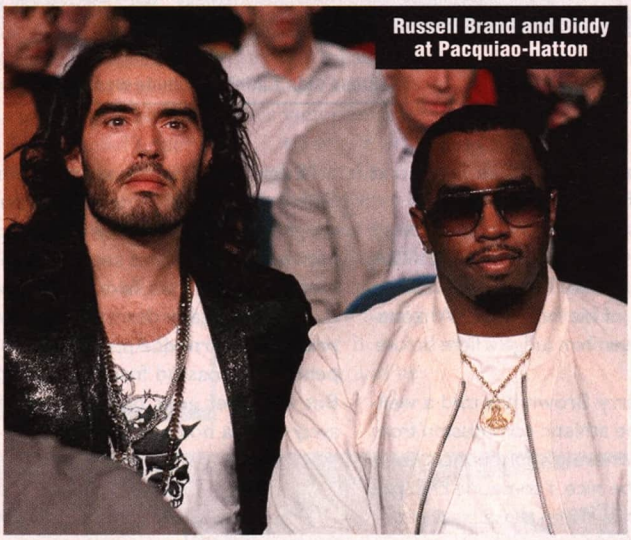


Mark Wahlberg at Mayweather-Mosley

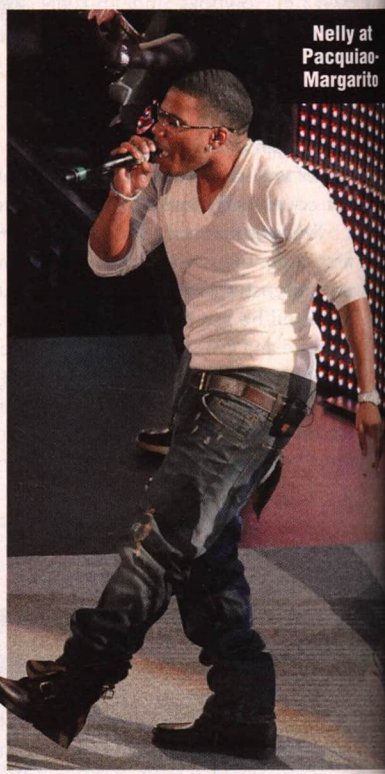
Paris Hilton at Mayweather-Mosley



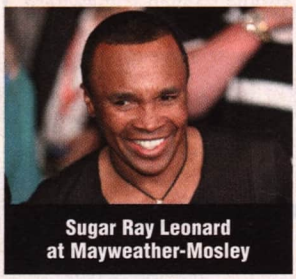
Jeremy Piven at Mayweather-Mosley



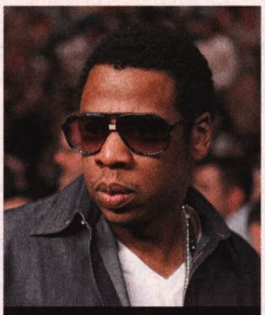
Russell Brand and Diddy at Pacquiao-Hatton



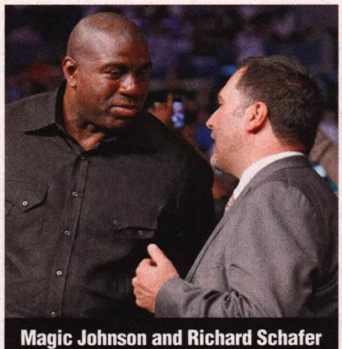
Nelly at Pacquiao-Margarito



Sugar Ray Leonard at Mayweather-Mosley

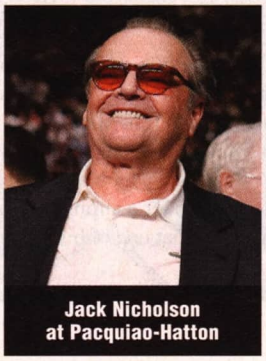


Jay-Z at Pacquiao-Hatton

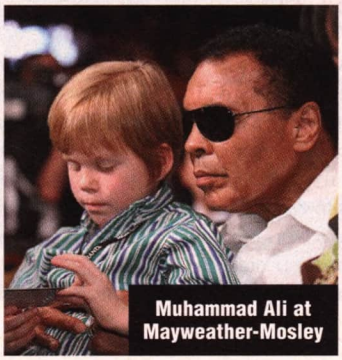


Magic Johnson and Richard Schafer at Mosley-Mora

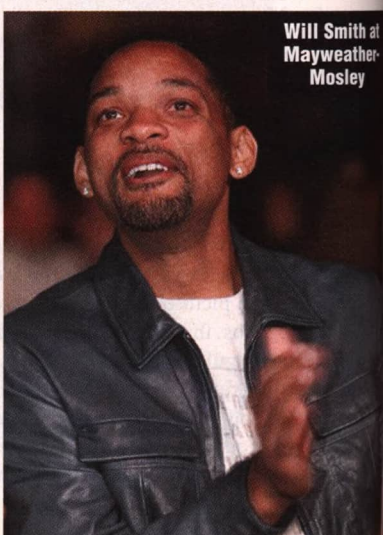
Hayden Panettiere at Klitschko-Briggs



Jack Nicholson at Pacquiao-Hatton



Muhammad Ali at Mayweather-Mosley



Will Smith at Mayweather-Mosley

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POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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The RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH

"I just try to send out the love everywhere."

Paulina Garces

Tale of the Tape

Height: 5'5"
Weight: 117
Measurements: 36-26-36
Stance: Orthodox
Reach: 20.5"
Favorite Fighter: Juan Manuel Marquez
Hometown: Medellin, Colombia
Current Location: Los Angeles, CA
Where you've seen her: Host of *En La Zona* and *Pura Raza* on LATV, Carl's Junior restaurants national ad campaign spokesmodel, Miss Ritmo Latino (Telemundo), Marcador Final (Telemundo)

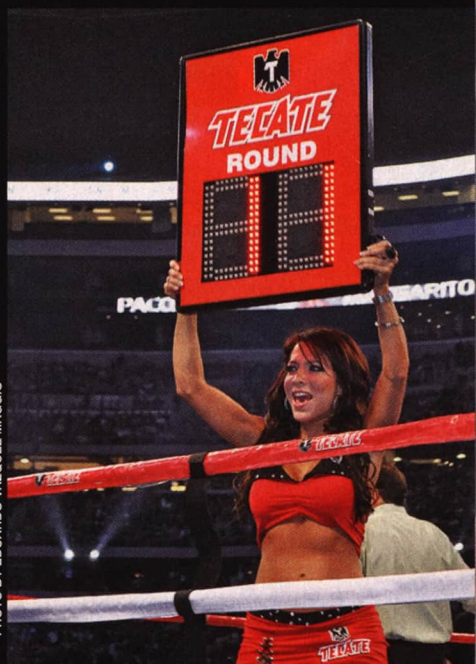

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PHOTO BY EDUARDO VAZQUEZ MAGGIO

PHOTO BY AJAY JOHNSON

When did you first become a ring card girl?
About 3½ years ago. I had been working for Tecate and they asked if I wanted to be a ring card girl. Of course, I said yes.

What is your most memorable fight?
Pacquiao vs. Margarito, because I've never seen a guy's face look that terrible before.

What is going through your mind when you are in the ring?
I'm thinking that people just want to have fun, so I want to connect with the audience. I just try to send out the love everywhere.

You were working at the Pacquiao-Margarito fight in November in front of 40,000 people. What was that like?
There was so much energy. That stadium is huge, so you literally feel like you are standing on an island in the middle of the ocean.

Were you nervous at all?
No, working at the fights is fun. I get more nervous when I have to do a lot of ad libbing like I just did at the Latin Grammy for my TV show.

It sounds like you don't get star-struck.
No, not really. There are only a few people such as Sean Penn or Benicio del Toro that would make me star-struck.

Tell us about Paulina the person. Have you ever boxed?
No, I'm not a physical person like that.

No, I mean trained in boxing or something similar?
Yes, sometimes I kick box at a gym in Burbank.

Is that how you stay in such great shape?
Yes, that and Pilates and I do yoga. But the most important part is eating healthy. I don't drink alcohol, except on very rare occasions when there is great company to break the rules with.

Like Sean Penn?
Yes. I would accept a drink from Sean Penn.

What kind of drink would it be?
Champagne, of course, or an Italian digestif called Fernet Branca because it has no added sugar and is full of herbs that give you a little kick and I've heard are also an aphrodisiac.

Hey, bartender. Two glasses of Fernet Branca, stat!
(laughs) Nice try.

What are you doing when you are not at work?
My daily goals are to stay physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy. I meditate every morning, do yoga and work out at least four times a week. And I cook a lot too.

I love a woman who can cook. If you were making dinner for us, what would we be eating?
Something very healthy. Maybe a nice piece of grilled salmon with rosemary and some steamed veggies that are still crunchy. I'm a biter. *(laughs)* And I love cucumbers!

Sounds delicious. Are you single?
Wow, you are very direct. Yes, I am single.

What do you look for in a guy?
There are six things that I look for: 1. Humbleness 2. Spirituality 3.Discipline, but the ability to break the rules sometimes 4. Passion and romance. I am a very passionate person 5. Curiosity 6. What am I forgetting? Oh yeah, Honesty.

I think this describes me perfectly. What are you doing this weekend?
(laughs)

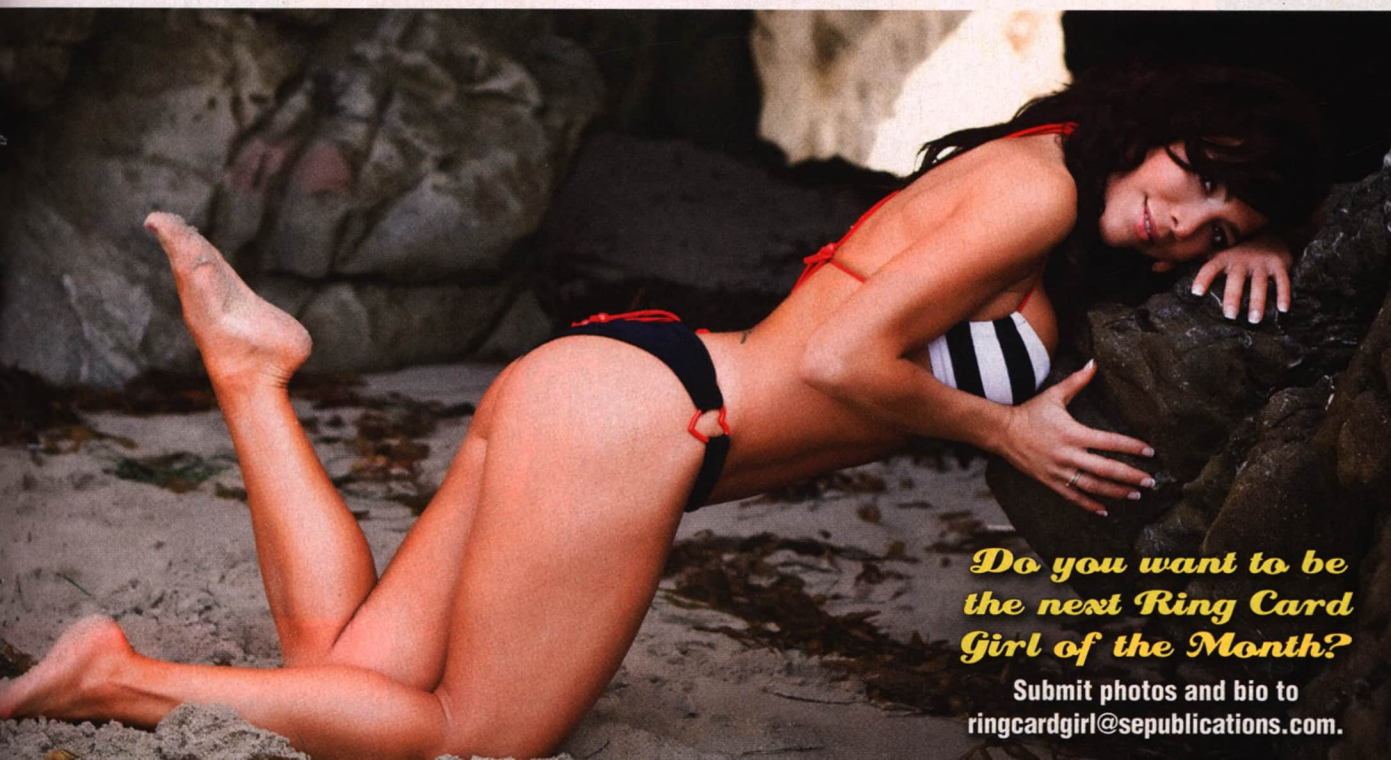
How can people get in touch with you for bookings?
My website is www.paulinagarces.com or you can contact my modeling agency, Ragaza LC Models, at (818) 679-8766.

Thank you, Paulina. See you at the next fight.
Gracias!

PHOTO BY JOE HILL

PHOTO BY ANGEL VARELA • HAIR AND MAKEUP BY CASEY ROBINSON

PHOTO BY ANGEL VARELA • HAIR AND MAKEUP BY CASEY ROBINSON



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MANNY PACQUIAO
Which Way Will He Go?

By Michael Rosenthal

Michael Koncz, Manny Pacquiao's longtime advisor, was responding to the notion that his client has somehow avoided African-American fighters when he revealed as clearly as possible the blue print for Pacquiao's future:

"The selection of opponents for Manny has nothing to do with race, creed, or color," an exasperated Koncz told fanhouse.com. "It's all about business. And they can cry all that they want. It's all about economics now with Manny's career. We have the luxury of doing that because Manny has proven to the world that he's got nothing left to prove.

"If there are any boxing people out there who doubt him, then, to hell with them."

What does that mean?

It means that Pacquiao's primary goal for the remainder of his career is to make as much money as possible at the least possible risk, which is the most-

basic premise of investing and the business of boxing, but not how we've come to view Pacquiao.

Gone are the days of thrilling, 50-50 matchups against the likes of Juan Manuel Marquez, Erik Morales, and Marco Antonio Barrera, fights that defined Pacquiao as a warrior and a boxer of sublime skill, fights that set up his amazing run against a series of bigger men.

Instead, Pacquiao almost certainly will continue to face opponents similar to his last two, Joshua Clottey and Antonio Margarito, competent but limited veterans with no realistic chance of actually beating the sport's number-one figure.

Take it, Koncz said, or leave it.

Pacquiao *would* take only one enormous risk—fighting Floyd Mayweather. And, to be fair, he genuinely likes the idea of testing his skills against his pound-for-pound rival. Make no mistake, though: Fighting Mayweather is good business. That's the primary motivation now. The two stand to make $40-million each or even more.

Can the fight be made? Who the hell knows? The parties have tried twice to make it happen and failed both times, primarily because of Mayweather's demand that Pacquiao submit to a blood test up until the day of the fight and Pacquiao's refusal to do so.

The sides are so far apart that Mayweather's camp inexplicably declared that negotiations never even took place the second time around, leaving many baffled and frustrated.

And we can't be certain how Mayweather's mounting legal problems might affect future negotiations. These issues probably will have to be sorted out before he can seriously consider entering negotiations to make the sport's biggest-possible matchup.

So let's presume for a moment that Mayweather is out. Where do the Pacquiao people turn? In the wrong direction, as we've seen in his last two fights.

Bob Arum, Pacquiao's promoter, needed someone to fight Pacquiao on March 13 after negotiations with Mayweather broke down the first time. So he did what the biggest promoters do these days: He plucked someone from his own stable of fighters with little regard to how compelling the matchup might be, cut a deal to stage the event at Cowboys Stadium, and *voila* … he had a fight.

Clottey was a legitimate contender but brought virtually nothing to the promotion. And it didn't matter. Arum, as brilliant as ever, simply emphasized the two things he knew would generate interest: his superstar and the site of the fight, Cowboys owner Jerry Jones' billion-dollar modern marvel.

It was impossible to get excited about the matchup, but Arum was right: The public bought into Pacquiao and the intrigue surrounding Cowboys Stadium. The result was a healthy payday for all but a lousy fight, which is what happens when money rules the day.

PROLONGED POUNDING
Round after round, Pacquiao punished Margarito, but the Mexican kept coming, eventually absorbing 474 punches.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

A RIVETING ROUT

The result of the Manny Pacquiao-Antonio Margarito fight on November 13 at Cowboys Stadium was predictable. A fast, immensely talented fighter will beat a slow, limited one almost every time even with a significant size disparity.

To see it happen, though, was something to behold.

Pacquiao, 144½ demonstrated his rare combination of speed and skills by turning Margarito's face into a slab of raw meat with two-, three-, four-punch combinations the Mexican never saw coming over 12 exhilarating but gruesome rounds.

Margarito, 150, as proud as any fighter and motivated to show he could compete with legal handwraps, never gave up and managed to land a few blows that Pacquiao said hurt him. However, it was clear after only a few rounds that this was more a vehicle to showcase Pacquiao's unusual gifts than an actual fight.

The 41,734 at Cowboys Stadium clearly were in jaw-dropping awe watching an artist at work, and the estimated 1.1 million who watched on pay-per-view television also had to be awed by Pacquiao's mastery.

The loser went the distance, but, by the final few rounds, his eyes virtually swollen shut, he took more punches than any man deserves to take. Pacquiao all but begged referee Laurence Cole to stop it. And afterward, Margarito's trainer, Cole and the ringside doctors were all criticized for failing to prevent unnecessary punishment.

The scores give you an idea of how one-sided the fight was: 120-108, 118-110 and 119-109.

However, Margarito's face told the story best: The grotesque bump below his right eye (which turned out to be a broken orbital bone), a deep cut below that, the swollen eyes, his beaten, reddened skin. Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's trainer, suggested it was the kind of beating that ends a fighter's career.

Meanwhile, the Pacquiao legend continued to grow as the one-time flyweight won a major sanctioning-body title in an unprecedented eighth weight class, this one at junior middleweight (even though the fighters agreed to a 150-pound catch weight). That's almost half of the 17 divisions.

PACQUAIO PUNISHED
Margarito connects with a right hand to Pacquiao's chin. Pacquiao admitted he was hurt a couple of times and that it had been his toughest fight.

PHOTO BY ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

And say what you will about Margarito's limitations. The former three-time welterweight titleholder outweighed Pacquiao by 17 pounds the day of the fight, which roughly translates to a three weight-division advantage. The size disparity apparently took a toll, and Pacquiao called it "the hardest fight of my career." But the result was never in doubt.

Pacquiao also enhanced his reputation as a humanitarian by easing up in the final rounds because he didn't want to hurt his beaten foe any further.

A resounding victory over a much bigger man. A title in an eighth weight class. An act of kindness in the most brutal of sports. That's what you call a good night's work.

—M.R.

Then came Pacquiao's most-recent fight. Once again, negotiations with Mayweather went nowhere, and Arum needed an opponent for November 13. And, again, he found one in his own stable: Antonio Margarito.

This time, the choice was made purely for business reasons because those in Pacquiao's camp knew from day one that the strong but plodding Mexican had no chance of winning, particularly because of his relative inactivity after he lost his license over illegal hand wraps. It was a terrible matchup.

Still, Arum knew he had another box-office winner for four principal reasons. One, Pacquiao had reached new heights in terms of fame. His segment on *60 Minutes* was evidence of that. Two, Pacquiao would be seeking a title in an unprecedented eighth weight class, which seemed exciting even though we know sanctioning-body belts have limited significance. Three, he would be fighting a much bigger man (a 17-pound difference on fight night). And, four, Margarito's handwrap incident was controversial, and controversy sells.

Again, the result was a lucrative promotion—Pacquiao reportedly will have made as much as $25-million—and a pathetic fight.

Pacquiao's performance, however, was spectacular. Margarito was overwhelmed by his undersized opponent's speed and punching accuracy, which allowed Pacquiao to dominate from start to finish and deliver a horrific beating. He entertained the crowd and a large television audience and won that eighth title.

The fact that Margarito later needed surgery to repair his broken face even though he had no business in the ring with Pacquiao in the first place didn't seem to matter. Somehow we're okay with mismatches as long as we're treated to action.

TIT FOR TAT
Margarito lands a left to the body, which leaves him open to Pacquiao's right to the chin.

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

COMPUBOX STATS

MANNY PACQUIAO		ANTONIO MARGARITO
1,069	Total Punches Thrown	817
474	Total Connects	229
44	Connect Percentage	28
713	Total Power Punches Thrown	312
411	Total Power Connects	135

NEW PACQUIAO RECORDS

Total Connects In A Single Round:
64 (10th round)

Total Power Connects In A Single Round:
57 (10th round)

Total Connects:
474 (old record: 336 vs. Miguel Cotto)

Total Power Punch Connects:
411 (old record: 276 vs. Cotto)

So is there any hope that this trend won't continue?

The good news is that Arum has run out of sacrificial lambs at Top Rank, the only possible exception being Miguel Cotto, and no one wants to see that rematch. He most likely will have to go outside his own company to find an acceptable opponent.

And there *are* legitimate opponents out there. Sergio Martinez, whose one-punch knockout of Paul Williams on November 20 was reminiscent of Pacquiao's kayo of Ricky Hatton, is an exciting option. Pacquiao would be facing a legitimate challenge and be in a position to earn a title in an unthinkable ninth weight class.

It won't happen, though. Pacquiao learned against Margarito a week before Martinez-Williams that fighting a significantly bigger man can take a toll on your body, even in a one-sided victory. He called it "the hardest fight in my career."

Imagine Pacquiao, a one-time flyweight champion, taking the punch that temporarily put Williams to sleep—not a pleasant image.

A logical choice would be Juan Manuel Marquez, with whom Pacquiao engaged in two compelling fights. Pacquiao has said he would consider it but also dismissed it as a fight the fans won't want to see, seemingly precluding it as a realistic possibility.

One possible reason? His promoter and Marquez's promoter, Golden Boy, don't do business.

A matchup against one of the exciting young stars in the rich 140-pound division, which is Pacquiao's natural weight, would be fascinating. Amir Khan, Timothy Bradley and Devon Alexander are probably too inexperienced to beat Pacquiao, but their youth, hunger and undeniable skills would make for a truly compelling fight.

Can you imagine how exciting it would be if Pacquiao were to throw himself into the 140-pound mix with Khan, Bradley, Alexander, Marcos Maidana, Victor Ortiz and the others? Whew!

Not going to happen. The junior welterweights are a bit too anonymous at the moment, meaning they might be talented but

THE HAPPY WARRIOR
Pacquiao acknowledges the cheers from his supporters as he enters the ring. His smile was even bigger after winning virtually every round.

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAN/GETTY IMAGES

couldn't generate enough interest to make it worth Pacquiao's while. Too much risk for too little gain.

A worthy possibility above 140 is Andre Berto, to whom Arum reportedly has put out feelers. That's a decent matchup because of the young welterweight titleholder's quickness, but it seems to be long shot at best for one overriding reason: Shane Mosley, who appeared at the time this article was written to be the leading candidate.

Mosley was once one of the best fighters in the world but demonstrated against Mayweather in May that his skills have faded badly. He had one compelling moment—a punch in the second round that hurt Mayweather—but otherwise was embarrassed by a far-superior boxer.

He followed that up by struggling against Sergio Mora, with whom he fought to a split-decision draw. That fight seemed to confirm conclusions after the Mayweather fight: Mosley, 39, just doesn't have it anymore. Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's trainer, said himself that Mosley should retire.

And now he could fight Pacquiao? Sadly, yes. Mosley is the perfect opponent for Pacquiao's new blueprint: big name, competent but ultimately overmatched.

Again, it makes perfect business sense. Mosley is a known quantity. Images of his destruction of Margarito linger in the minds of fans, who might dismiss the Mayweather debacle as a bad match at this point in Mosley's career.

And, of course, Mosley would fare better against Pacquiao than Margarito did. Almost any fighter with some speed and solid ability would. Still, we would be looking at a similar situation to that of Pacquiao-Margarito: The top fighter in the world dismembering someone he probably shouldn't be fighting.

Pacquiao would take home another monstrous paycheck, as would Mosley, and the fans would cheer the slaughter. This very likely is how the greatest fighter of his era will close out his career.

Can we blame him? Not really. We always hope that our boxing heroes put pride over money, but that's not realistic. It might also not even be fair.

Pacquiao told reporters in the Philippines that he plans to fight for three more years, which translates to five or six more fights. He already has one foot out of boxing and in his second career, politics. The congressman from the Sarangani province has loftier things on his mind than exchanging punches with another pug, which might be one reason he wasn't 100-percent prepared for his fight against Margarito.

WHO SAID WHAT

• Manny Pacquiao more than made up with speed what he lacked in size. Giving away pounds and inches, boxing's little superstar turned Antonio Margarito into a bloody and nearly blind fighter with a dizzying array of punches Saturday night in a lopsided decision victory that wasn't close from the opening rounds on.

—Associated Press

• After this great performance by Manny, Mayweather just has to put up or shut up now and move out of the country. Let's face it. Manny's way above him at this point because I remember when he [Mayweather] was ducking Margarito and he wouldn't fight him either. If he doesn't fight Manny now, we know this guy should retire.

—Freddie Roach

• Pacquiao is chicken soup for boxing's soul.

—Ron Kantowski, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*

• Here it is, and you can quote: This is one hell of a fighter, the likes of which I haven't seen since Willie Pep and Sugar Ray Robinson. Yes, those two whom I've always regarded as the best ever.

—Bill Gallo, New York *Daily News*

• I've already accorded him the greatest Asian fighter ever, the greatest left-handed fighter ever. He's easily in the top 20 on my all-time list."

—Bert Sugar

• Pacquiao, a tornado force with a bottomless quiver of punches, doesn't seem to care who he fights. The bell rings; he lunges up toward the face of his foe, his arms spinning like helicopter blades, his fists pounding flesh. Pacquiao is the rare boxer built with volcanic power and imbued with a hunger that doesn't recede despite his riches. In a sport that demands almost delusional lust for pain, Manny Pacquiao manages to avert the complacency of affluence.

—Jason Keidel, CBS Sports & Entertainment Publications

• Manny Pacquiao's impressive conquest of bigger opponents, however, has ushered in a new fighting style in boxing, one that is defined by endless motions inside the ring, while at the same time connecting, not with stinging punches, but with bone-crushing blows.

—Manny Pinol, Philboxing.com

• Congrats! Now that you won, it is time to retire and focus on your district.

—Bishop Francis de Leon

Thus, we can understand that Pacquiao wants to build his fortune while he still can. He has invested untold blood and sweat in transforming himself from a talented but raw fighter 10 years ago into one of the greatest champions ever, taking many risks and thousands of punches to the head and body—in sparring and in fights—along the way.

Now, as Koncz correctly said, he's in a position where he can make more money in his remaining handful of fights than all but a few boxers make in their entire careers.

Yes, he's earned that right. And, heck, it's fun to watch Pacquiao fight anyone. It's just not as much fun as watching him fight someone who actually has a chance to beat him. ■

Michael Rosenthal is the co-editor of RingTV.com.

HAYE MAKES QUICK WORK OF RELUCTANT HARRISON

By Brian Doogan

When Welsh rain gave way to Caribbean thunder, Frank Bruno provided far more than his expected fair share of it, and Lennox Lewis had to survive some of the most alarming moments of his boxing life before keeping his version of the world heavyweight title. So began one enduring description of the all-British heavyweight clash between then WBC titleholder Lewis and Bruno in October 1993 at Cardiff Arms Park. Lewis would ultimately be crowned undisputed champion, and even Bruno would become a WBC beltholder. And their bout was competitive and exciting until its conclusion in the seventh round, a fact that even Bruno's fiercest critics acknowledged.

Alas, the postmortem for its heavily hyped sequel at the MEN Arena in Manchester, David Haye versus Audley Harrison—both of whose roots, like Lewis' and Bruno's, are embedded in the Caribbean—proved far less flattering.

"What happened in a boxing ring in Manchester on Saturday night had to be described as a crime—and no less shocking for being so easily anticipated," wrote James Lawton in *The Independent* (London). "The first boos came before the referee was obliged to remind the combatants that they were involved in something called a fight and that, while larceny was one thing, barefaced, egregious, contemptuous, shameless

PHOTO BY ANDRE COULDRIDGE/ACTION IMAGES

thievery was something else again. Don't let anyone tell you this was a fight that went wrong when the first bell sounded. It was one that should have been killed at birth and with no more punishing a weapon than pure, undiluted scorn."

Other observers were less verbose but no less vitriolic. "Harrison Fraud," opined *The Sun*'s Steven Howard. "Here was the greatest opportunity of Harrison's career, and how did it end up? With him stumbling out of the ring to the sound of 23,000 fight fans singing: 'You're s___ and you know you are.' Could there have been a greater humiliation?" *The Mirror's* Oliver Holt concurred: "Audley Harrison lived his boxing life the wrong way round. He began it as a national hero, acclaimed for overcoming a difficult childhood to win Olympic gold in Sydney. He slid into unpopularity, chastised for greed, arrogance, and a failure to live up to his extravagant boasts. He ended it derided as a contemptible coward, staggering from the ring with the crude chants of the mob ringing in his ears … and so, one of the strangest and saddest episodes in British boxing came to a close on a bleak, bleak night for the sport." The *Daily Mail*'s Martin Samuel summed up his thoughts succinctly: "The biggest loser in Manchester was not humiliated challenger Harrison but the promoter who has to sell the next pay-per-view show. In the aftermath, there were too many vowing 'never again' for this to be classed as anything but a desperately sorry night for boxing."

Boxing in Britain will survive, of course, even this unedifying episode. What we witnessed in Manchester was horribly predictable, a pay-per-view show for the reality TV age in which we live. The hype which surrounded this promotion served to convince a packed and frenzied audience—the 23,000 or so who were jammed into the MEN Arena were augmented by an estimated 700,000 customers who bought British TV network Sky's pay-per-view at $23.85 a hit—before the delusions of one of its flawed participants were laid bare while the winner walked away with the opportunity to mix it with the established stars of the business, world champion Wladimir Klitschko and his brother, Vitali.

The X Factor, the UK talent show franchise devised by Simon Cowell as a replacement for *Pop Idol*, will come to the US in 2011, and it is the 'X Factor' in Haye that may stir greater appeal in heavyweight

PHOTO BY ANDRE COULDRIDGE/ACTION IMAGES

UNDER FIRE
Once Haye opened up, Harrison quickly succumbed to the WBA titleholder's onslaught. In fact, Harrison hardly landed a scoring punch in the disappointing battle between British heavyweights.

STILL WAITING
Matches between Haye and either Vitali or Wladimir are the only two heavyweight bouts most fans want to see. Negotiations for such fights have twice fallen apart, but, hopefully, they can be made in 2011.

PHOTO BY CLEMENS BILAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

boxing outside Europe, where the Klitschkos, of course, are a prolific box-office draw. Haye's appeal is almost universal, which is why an event which masqueraded as a fight proved so alluring to the British public at large when the harsh realities of boxing dictated that Haye-Harrison was a mismatch from beginning to end, so profound in fact that the 38-year-old challenger did not land one meaningful punch.

Even some aficionados were swept away by the tidal wave of extreme and distasteful trash talk in which both men indulged during the build-up. It seemed incongruous in the immediate aftermath, for instance, to reflect on Harrison's pre-fight statement: "Looking into David Haye's eyes, I can see he's starting to wilt. Don't be surprised if I knock him out in a couple of rounds … This is my destiny. I'm cool, calm and collected. He's in disarray … My spirit, my destiny, my heart, my everything, I'm unbreakable … Karma will come and smash David Haye in the face on November 13." But, as ever, reality hit hardest.

The people who suggested on the eve of battle—a scarcely credible euphemism for what transpired between the ropes—that a 43-pound weight advantage and a longer reach, by eight inches, warranted giving Harrison some kind of chance had clearly parked all memory of his lopsided loss on points against Dominick Guinn in 2006 in a California casino, which left him on the road to nowhere. Fellow Briton Michael Sprott had knocked him out in three rounds, and Martin Rogan, a cab driver from Belfast, Northern Ireland beat him on points—increasing the derision that had been hurled in his direction almost from the moment he embarked on his career in the paid ranks. So how could his be viewed as a viable challenge to a boxer, in Haye, who possesses prodigious power and a finisher's instinct? The discrepancy in class and appetite for the fight could not have been more apparent, though Harrison's embarrassment will have been eased by the $1.5-million payday, a barely deserved bookend to a career that began with another $1.5-million deal from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) when he set off from his success in Sydney a decade ago.

It was anticipated that Haye would receive a sum in the region of $6.8-million for a performance that required him to just about break sweat. Typecast as the pantomime villain, Harrison's ring entrance provoked jeering and howls of abuse from the crowd, some of whom had paid up to $2,000 on the black market for the dubious privilege of sitting ringside.

In striking contrast, the cheers swelled when Haye, 25-1 (23), arrived in the ring and intimidated Harrison, 27-5 (20), with his first act, which was to step straight into Harrison's corner and invade his space. While Haye's aggressive intentions were immediately on show, Harrison stared across the ring towards the opposite corner, resolutely avoiding eye contact. When the first bell rang, there was a sense of anticipation, but it evaporated quickly. Caution punctuated every move as both men remained outside of punching range.

Haye, 210½, maintained this to such an extent throughout the opening three minutes that the only blow of consequence was a left hook that grazed Harrison's jaw and caused the crowd's widespread jeering to stop temporarily.

Puerto Rican referee Luis Pabon was moved to halt the non-action and intervene in round two in an effort to encourage the mutual aggression implicit in all of the bombast beforehand (at an early juncture, Haye had promised to deliver a beating "as one-sided as a gang rape"). Despite the lecture, Harrison, 253½, remained firmly in defensive mode, but Haye began to unleash his right hand with ominous force.

"It all became real very quickly in front of him," reflected Adam Booth, Haye's trainer and manager. "Audley's always known what David's about, and he began to freeze and get anxious. And David stoked up that anxiety before he went for it in the third round."

Midway through the round, Haye saw his opening. When he attacked Harrison, his

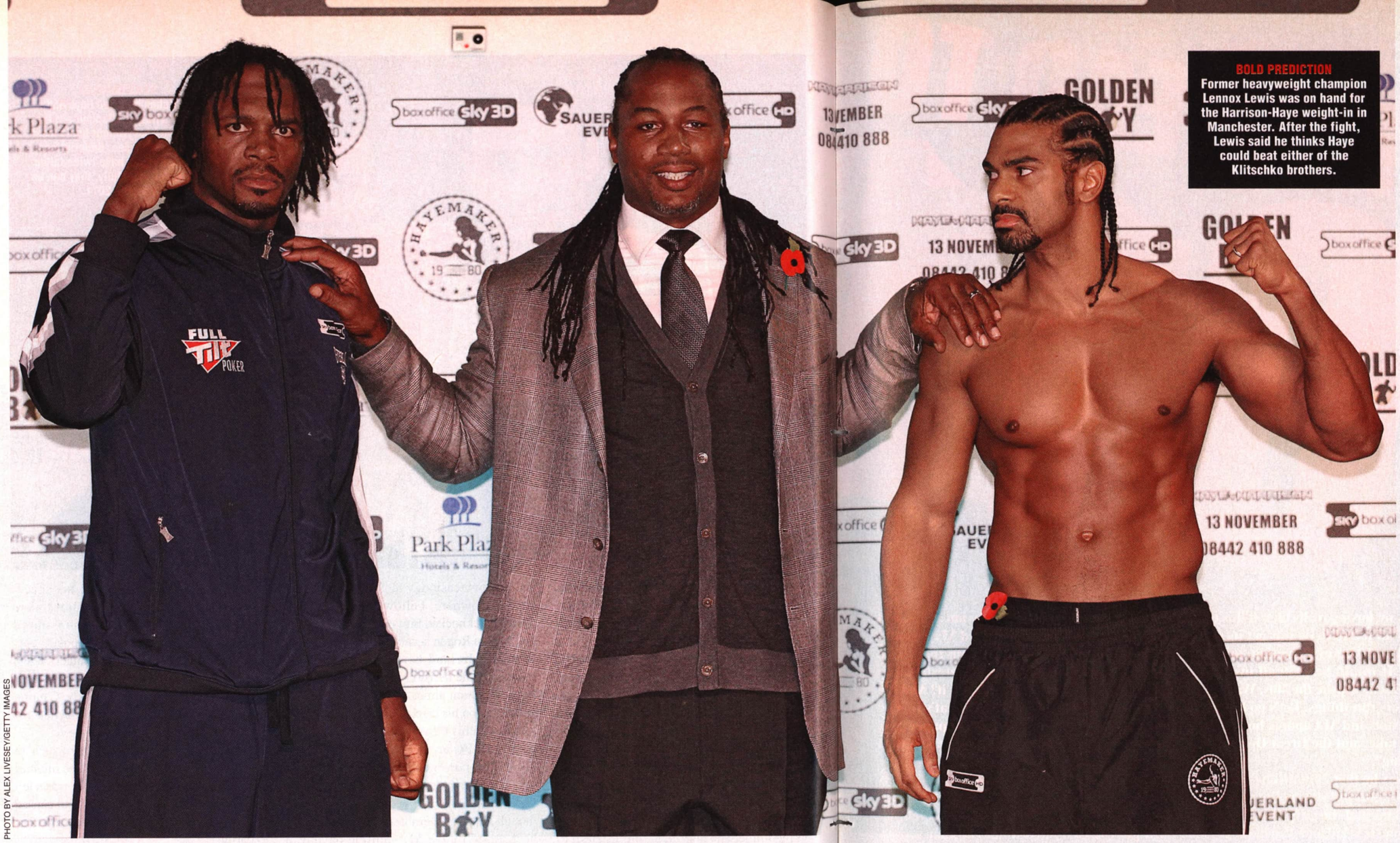

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

BOLD PREDICTION
Former heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis was on hand for the Harrison-Haye weight-in in Manchester. After the fight, Lewis said he thinks Haye could beat either of the Klitschko brothers.

feet left the canvas, and the punches rained in, started off by a right hand that caused the challenger's knees to dip and his entire body to shudder. Momentarily stunned, Harrison was a lame duck, and Haye pummeled him with a variety of violent punches to the head and body. Harrison's eyes were like a rabbit's caught in headlights, and, even when Haye ceased his assault for a brief respite, he stayed glued to the ropes and remained resistant to throwing punches in return. Haye began punching again, and Harrison's resistance crumbled. Two more right hands crashed brutally against his head before he fell to the floor. Nothing could redeem him in his darkest hour, even though he climbed unsteadily back to his feet at the count of eight. Haye battered him again with a few more blows to the head, culminating in another powerful right. The referee called a halt at 1:53 of round three.

Quickly, the victim was helped back to his stool by his cornermen, and, just as quickly, he was subjected to a torrent of verbal abuse by the people in the arena he had managed to con.

"I didn't really get going," he said back in his dressing room, still immersed in his grand delusion. "Our strategy was to take it into the late rounds and then put pressure on David. I felt the earlier rounds I had hold of his rhythm. He caught me with a good shot, and it felt like it was behind the head. But no excuse, he caught me with a good shot. I went down and I got up. He caught me with another shot, and the referee jumped in. I thought he was a bit premature. He just caught me with a good shot. It happens in the heavyweight division. When I got up and beat the count, my mind kind of switched to sitting there, waiting for the shot to go for it, but I didn't have the opportunity.

"I got up, I beat the count and I felt I was okay to continue. So I didn't really get a chance to dig in and take it to the later rounds. I didn't really get a chance to put my strategy in. I felt really good coming into this fight—great actually. I really felt it was going to be my night, but it wasn't to be. So I'm going to have to sit down and see what I do. Obviously, my mission is incomplete; my goal is not realized. All credit to David Haye."

What we learned about Haye in "the fight that never was" was not much.

"I'm the main man, and there's noone else for the Klitschkos to fight. I'll fight either one of them," he said, now a familiar refrain. "It will happen because they have got nowhere else to go, and it will happen in 2011 because I will retire before I turn 31 years old. There is no one else who can bring the excitement and the numbers I do, and the Klitschkos know this. The world heavyweight title will be mine in the next 12 months."

Lennox Lewis was quick to support his fellow Brit. "David can whup them both," he said. "They have been beaten before. They have chinks in their armor, and it only takes one shot. Haye has that big Hayemaker right-hand punch of his to do it, and he doesn't need to accept less money to fight the Klitschkos either. He should stand his ground and get half the money, like he wants. I believe the Klitschkos will eventually come to the table and will humble themselves. The Klitshckos need Haye terribly. The last few fights for the Klitshckos have been terrible, and they are fast losing a lot of respect around the world."

So, as the circus packed up, the last great heavyweight was banging the drum for a real heavyweight fight—a novel idea entering the second decade of the 21st century, when the suspension of reality offers nights like these. ■

Brian Doogan is The RING's European Correspondent.

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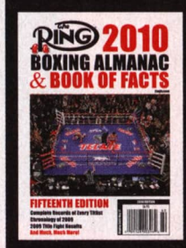

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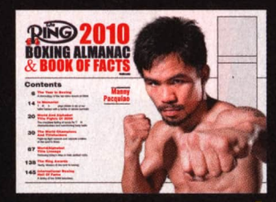

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A LOOK AHEAD TO 2011

By William Dettloff

Boy, boxing really blew it this time. Here it could have made itself relevant again, and all it had to do was get its two best fighters and biggest stars, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, into a ring and all would be right again with the world. It would be 1956 all over again. Well, maybe not 1956. Didn't gangsters run things then? Maybe the '40s. Wait. World War II happened in the '40s, didn't it? And the gangsters ran things. Let's go back a little farther. Yes, the '20s and '30s. That's it. The Charleston and Al Capone, hobos in boxcars, prohibition, no-decisions, newspaper guys on the take, and the Great Depression. Wait. Tell us again when everything was perfect in boxing?

It may be that 2010 will be remembered as the year boxing didn't close the deal on its biggest fight, but not by the people who have been watching closely. Sure, the general sports fans and the guys who play golf or watch football all weekend and couldn't tell you which one is Wlad and which one is Vitali, those guys will tell you boxing is in some serious trouble if it can't even get its two top guys to fight. After all, look at the UFC. Look at how they do it. Their top guys fight every 11 minutes or they get kicked out of the league. Or something. Right?

Look at this sport closely. Look where it's going. Mayweather-Pacquiao is one fight. A bunch of hype beforehand, almost certainly a letdown when it happens in terms of excitement, and then what? It's one event. No sport lives on one event.

Lots of good things happened in 2010, and we look at them here and try to gauge what they'll mean for 2011. Some crappy things happened too, of course, but as many good as crappy, and, if you've been alive for any appreciable length of time, you know that if you get as much good as bad in anything, you're ahead of the game. That's where we're headed: ahead of the game. 2011 will be an outstanding year for this sport, and not only because Pacquiao, its biggest star, has exploded, but because a lot is going on to create a renaissance between the ropes, to find the next Pacquiao, and the one after him, and the one after him. And he doesn't have to be American anymore. He can be from a country you've never heard of and couldn't pronounce if you had two tongues, yet you'll be able to watch him progress like he was from your hometown.

So you've got all that. And Pacquiao-Mayweather will probably happen in 2011. What more could you ask for?

PHOTO BY LANDRY MAJOR/GETTY IMAGES

What Went Wrong: Duh. They couldn't make Pacquiao-Mayweather. It wasn't for lack of trying. Bob Arum tried. Richard Schaefer tried. The media all tried. It didn't happen—first because Pacquiao wouldn't agree to Mayweather's demands for Olympic-style drug testing, the second because who the hell knows. The point is it didn't happen, and, any time the biggest fight that can be made doesn't come together, it's not really a good thing. It would be like the NFL not having a Super Bowl, baseball not having a World Series, or an MMA card not ending with a pig roast.

What It Means for 2011: Pretty good things, actually. That it didn't happen in 2010 leaves open the good possibility that it will happen in 2011. Also, it helps that in the interim Pacquiao beat two good fighters in Josh Clottey and Antonio Margarito, and Mayweather schooled Shane Mosley. The down side: Mayweather's legal troubles. That could wreck the whole damn thing.

What Went Wrong: Showtime's innovative, ballsy "Super Six" tournament very nearly fell apart just when we were celebrating the series' popularity, all the good press it was getting, and all the good fights we were seeing, Mikkel Kessler decided, er, we mean suffered, an eye injury that reportedly necessitates a long layoff. If that wasn't bad enough, Andre Dirrell, fresh off his upset of Arthur Abraham, reported that he too had to withdraw because of a specific type of neurological problem that in some quarters is believed to manifest in an acute disinclination to fight Andre Ward.

What It Means for 2011: It will be a long time before Kessler and Dirrell are able to restore the good will they had built up with their recent Super Six victories, whether or not their claims of injury are legitimate. We also can't imagine their profiles will improve after their departure from the tournament. In other words: Wow, good move, fellas. Who's your business advisor, Lindsay Lohan?

To the rest of us? Not all that much. Sure, it would have been nice for this tournament to have succeeded all the way through as planned, but this is boxing after all. The upside is it showed everyone how *not* to do a tournament—meaning, don't drag it out. So we will still get tournaments, they'll just be short and succinct, which is never a bad thing.

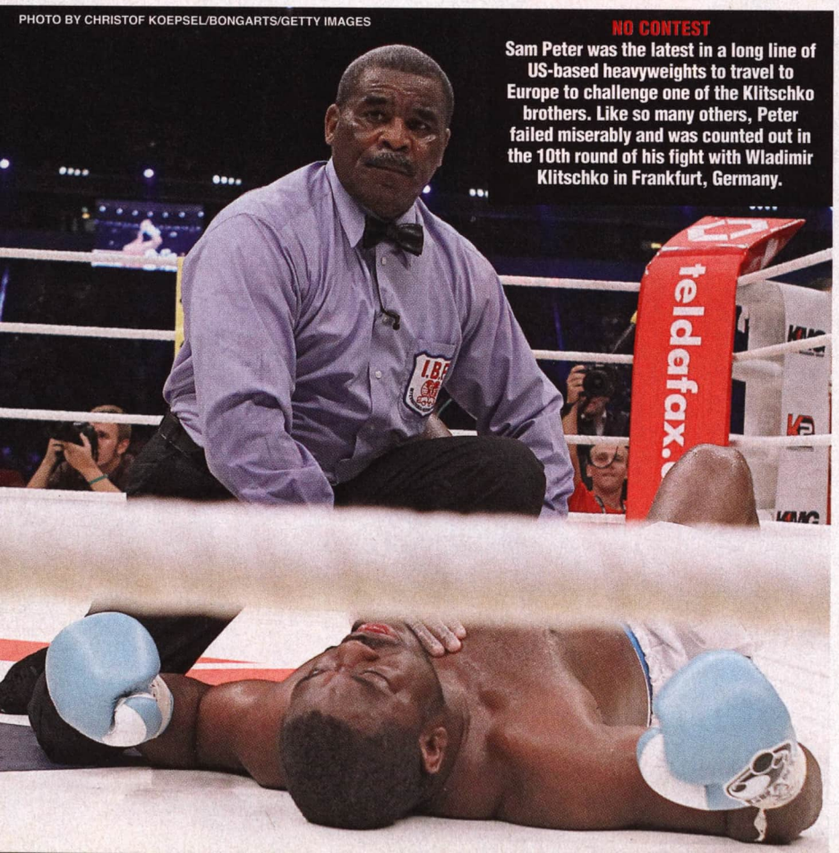
What Went Wrong: Boxing returned to Yankee Stadium, and no one cared. Well, almost no one. You have to give Arum credit for trying. He hoped putting Yuri Foreman and Miguel Cotto in Yankee Stadium in New York would lead to a big resurgence in ballpark boxing. That would have been nice. But on fight night, a disappointing crowd of 20,272 showed up, which wouldn't have been a sellout in Madison Square Garden. It was a nice enough crowd and a great idea. It didn't work out.

What It Means for 2011: No more big ballpark fights outside of those involving Manny Pacquiao, taking place in Cowboys Stadium in Arlington or in big stadiums in Europe. Boxing in America isn't ready for a return to big-stadium boxing. Not yet, anyway.

What Went Wrong: Kelly Pavlik had a terrible year. Remember after he beat Jermain Taylor and everyone was saying Pavlik was going to be the next big star that carried boxing on his back? Who could argue? He had everything: a big right hand, Caucasian parents, a story, and a certain UPS-guy charisma. Then came the staph infection. Then Sergio Martinez. Then he hurt a rib training for Brian Vera and had to be pulled from the Pacquiao-Margarito card.

What It Means for 2011: Boxing always needs working-class heroes. It's not the worst thing in the world if we've already seen the best of Pavlik, but it sure wouldn't hurt business if he got some of his mojo back in 2011.

PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES



NO CONTEST
Sam Peter was the latest in a long line of US-based heavyweights to travel to Europe to challenge one of the Klitschko brothers. Like so many others, Peter failed miserably and was counted out in the 10th round of his fight with Wladimir Klitschko in Frankfurt, Germany.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

"MONEY" MAKER
Floyd Mayweather returned to action against Shane Mosley and proved that he's still got what it takes to dominate top fighters and attract a large pay-per-view audience. HBO reported approximately 1.4 millions buys, generating roughly $78-million in revenue.

What Went Wrong: American heavyweight boxing hit rock bottom. Sam Peter, knocked out. Eddie Chambers, knocked out. Shannon Briggs, beaten to a dreadlocked pulp. HBO out of the business of airing heavyweight title fights! Can you imagine? Not a single American heavyweight who is considered even a remotely legitimate challenger to world champion Wladimir Klitschko or his belt-owning older brother, Vitali. My, how the mighty have fallen.

What It Means for 2011: This will not change in 2011. It may not change until 2020. Or ever. Maybe it will never change. Maybe there will never be another American world heavyweight champion. Get used to it. Besides, there are what, 149 other weight classes to shoot for?

What Went Wrong: Floyd Mayweather really pissed off white guys. His video calling Pacquiao all manner of unflattering names while making fun of unfavorable Asian stereotypes got the overwhelmingly white, politically correct boxing press in an uproar, even if Pacquiao more or less shrugged it off. Not Floyd's best moment.

What It Means for 2011: If Mayweather and Pacquiao don't fight, it means nothing. It's over. If they do fight, it will become one of the many tools the promoters and their minions use to stoke fan enthusiasm. It will, as they say in the entertainment business, grow legs.

What Went Right: Manny Pacquiao went viral: *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Time Magazine*, *60 Minutes*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, Congressman of the Philippines. In two fights against fairly non-competitive opponents, there were more than 70,000 fans in Cowboys Stadium and millions more in pay-pre-view revenue. Without missing a beat, Pacquiao has picked up where Oscar De La Hoya left off as boxing's biggest star, and, outside the US at least, has surpassed the Golden Boy, who some predicted would be the sport's last big attraction.

What It Means for 2011: Pacquiao's matches against Josh Clottey and Antonio Margarito demonstrated that no matter who he fights, big, big money will be involved. A match against Mayweather will blow the roof off everything.

What Went Right: Floyd Mayweather was transcendent against Shane Mosley. It wasn't just that he beat Mosley, who was 39 and ready to be taken; it was how he did it. Sure he got hurt in the second round. Big deal. After that, he walked Mosley down and gave him the beating of a lifetime. It was just the kind of performance you want to see if you're trying to make the richest fight in history.

What It Means for 2011: Mayweather's win demonstrated he hasn't lost a step and remains the best pure boxer alive. It also, at least momentarily, shut up those who

claimed he was ducking any decent welterweight he could in favor of facing older, smaller guys like Juan Manuel Marquez. Mostly, it means he remains undefeated and a big box office star in his own right, which will make things sticky (again) when the time comes to negotiate (again) for a Pacquiao fight.

What Went Right: Tomasz Adamek made a successful move to heavyweight. Wins over Jason Estrada, Chris Arreola, and Michael Grant demonstrated that, even

10 FIGHTS WE'D LI

For the second year in a row, not one of the fights we called for in this section happened. That's got to mean something.

1. **Juan Manuel Lopez-Celestino Caballero**
   This is a better fight than Lopez-Yuriorkis Gamboa because Caballero couldn't go backward if he were on a conveyor belt.
2. **Alfredo Angulo-James Kirkland**
   After putting on the Fight of the Year, they can compare their experiences navigating the business end of a policeman's baton.
3. **Victor Ortiz-Brandon Rios**
   They can punch, and they really dislike one another. What the hell are we waiting for?
4. **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam-Oleydong Sithsamerchai**
   Because it would be fun to watch Teddy Atlas' head explode while he handicaps it on *Friday Night Fights*.
5. **Giovani Segura-Ivan Calderon II**
   The classic boxer-puncher matchup deserves a sequel.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

if Adamek isn't the exciting destroyer he was at 200 pounds, he is a serviceable heavyweight, and, these days, those are hard to come by. Plus, Main Events continued to build him into a regional star in New Jersey with a very strong and passionate Polish following. He's not a match yet for the Brothers Klitschko and maybe won't ever be, but, hell, they can't last forever. Can they?

What It Means for 2011: More blood-lettings in The Prudential Center in Newark, which

KE TO SEE

Exactly what, we don't know, but that's not going to stop us from trying again this year. Promoters, listen up.

6. Yuri Foreman-Sergiy Dzinziruk
Don't expect any concussions or haymakers, but, if you're a true fan of The Sweet Science, this is the one for you.

7. Saul Alvarez-Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.
The two most popular Mexican prospects match up better than you think.

8. Wladimir Klitschko-David Haye
Yes, Klitschko probably jabs him into next week. But what if he doesn't?

9. Miguel Cotto-Andre Berto
The problem with Berto is he's better than he or his management thinks he is. This is a war from beginning to end.

10. Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.-Daniel Ponce De Leon
Another Puerto Rico-Mexican war guaranteed to be a slugfest. What's not to like?

MEXICAN SLUGFEST
What more could you ask for than a match between Mexico's two young stars, Saul Alvarez and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.? Alvarez blasts Carlos Baldomir with a left hook (opposite page) and Chavez comes over the top with a right hand against Troy Rowland (left).

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

WISH LIST FOR 2011

POPULAR POLE
Every weight class could use two guys like Tomasz Adamek, an all-business boxer who draws large crowds to his bouts at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Boxing is the greatest sport in the world. We don't have to tell you that. That doesn't mean it's perfect—there are always things we would change if we could. Here are 30 things we're hoping 2011 brings.

- No more fights between UFC guys and boxers unless at least half of them are conducted under boxing rules.
- A permanent work visa for Alfredo Angulo.
- A contented retirement, 20/20 vision, and no more headaches for Israel Vazquez.
- No more keeping fights in-house, unless your house is big enough for everyone.
- More months like the last two of 2010.
- A full schedule of NFL games, MMA bouts, and whatever else keeps Gus Johnson off *Showtime Championship Boxing*.
- More belts, more titles, more weight classes, more, more, more! We're all champions!
- Two guys like Tomasz Adamek in every weight class.
- For Evander Holyfield, James Toney, Bernard Hopkins, Ray Oliveira, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, Roy Jones, and all the other old guys to fight as good and long as they want whether you like it or not.
- A good orthodontist for Jorge Arce.
- No more namby-pamby, hypersensitive sportswriters.
- Three guys just like Glen Johnson in every weight class.
- Karma for Mikkel Kessler and Andre Dirrell.
- A return to the practice of opening big fights by introducing the great fighters in attendance and having each take a bow in the ring.
- No more Arthur Mercante Jr. Same for Joe Cortez.
- Busier schedules for Tavoris Cloud, Dmitry Pirog, Sergiy Dzinrizuk, and any other fighter who wants to go to work but is held back by lazy and/or short-sighted promoters, managers, or TV suits.
- A big pay raise for Ken Hershman. He's earned it, and then some.
- Less blah-blah between rounds, especially commercials. More round card girls.
- More broadcasters who don't think they're more important than the fighters.
- More unrehearsed Oscar De La Hoya. He says the damnedest things.
- Two guys like Manny Pacquiao in every weight class.
- More round card girls.
- More open training sessions. What the hell's the big secret? We know what you're going to do. So does your opponent. Open the doors.
- More promotional jobs like the one Main Events has done with Tomasz Adamek.
- Personal bankruptcy for Floyd Mayweather. That'll get his ass back in the ring.
- More *24/7* and *Fight Camp 360*.
- The dissolution of the NFL. Watch the gyms fill up with kick-ass American heavyweights.
- Big fights for Humberto Soto, Andreas Kotelnik, Chris Henry, Ali Funeka, Sergio Mora, Jhonny Gonzalez, Eric Morel, Ulises Solis, and Vanes Martirosyan.
- Some bubble wrap for Kelly Pavlik to walk around in. The guy is fragile.
- More round card girls.

—W.D.

LOOKING GOOD
Round card girls have become an essential part of any boxing promotion. They add a touch of glamour to the show, and, as far as we're concerned, the more the merrier.

PHOTO BY MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

are a heck of a lot of fun and maybe, if we get lucky, a fight against an upper-tier heavyweight like Alexander Povetkin or even David Haye. Bottom line is a guy like Adamek is only good news.

What Went Right: Showtime announced another tournament. Good for them! It would have been so easy for Ken Hershman to say to hell with it and run like he was on fire away from boxing. Heaven knows we would have. Instead, he ran *toward* the fire, putting together a four-man single-elimination bantamweight tournament featuring Abner Mares, Vic Darchinyan, Joseph Agbeko, and Yonnhy Perez.

What It Means for 2011: What else? More tournaments. And tournaments are good for business. They don't always get *all* of the best fighters in a division to fight one another, but they get most of them. And most are better than none any day of the week.

What Went Right: HBO stuck to its guns demanding high-quality fights. You can call them one of the game's bigger impediments to making good fights, but, without the suits demanding higher-quality goods, the Paul Williams-Sergio Martinez rematch doesn't get made—at least when it did. Amir Khan-Marcus Maidana probably doesn't either. Remember the goal of promoters and managers: make a lot of money for taking a small risk. *Repeat*. Without HBO demanding better matchups, we're at the will of the promoters. Wouldn't that be fun?

What It Means for 2011: We can only hope it means more of the same kind of action we got in the last two months of 2010. Every year we hear from Ross Greenburg about his plans to make HBO the boxing entertainment powerhouse it used to be. The changes have been nominal, but we're moving in the right direction if November and December are any indication.

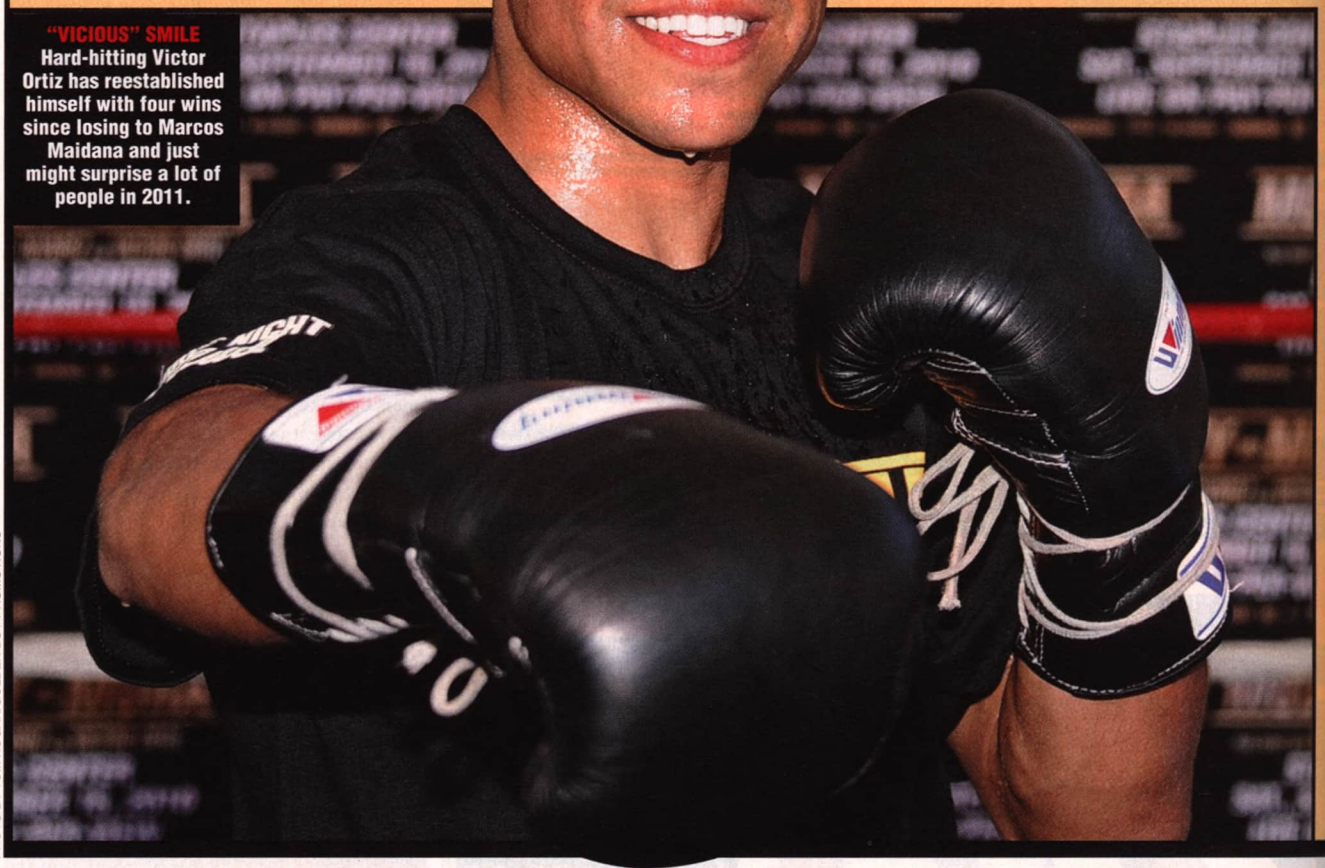
What Went Right: American TV (re)discovered boxing in Canada. ESPN, HBO, and Showtime all aired fights from Montreal, which is the new go-to city for packed arenas and wildly partisan fans. Exciting guys such as Lucian Bute, Jean Pascal, and up-and-coming puncher David Lemieux have the fight game rocking in the land that gave us George Chuvalo, the Hilton Brothers, and, um, Eric Lucas.

What It Means for 2011: Only good things. Wherever boxing prospers it's good for business and especially when it's not a 19-hour plane ride away. If we had our druthers, there would be fights from Montreal on the tube every month.

PREDICTIONS FOR

Predicting what's going to happen in a sport as volatile and erratic as boxing is never easy, but we think we're finally getting a handle on it. In fact, if at least half of these predictions don't come true, we promise to punish ourselves by putting together a compilation of Gus Johnson's greatest boxing calls. Luckily for us, it will be a very short collection.

- Manny Pacquiao will be named the first-ever winner of the Greatest Human Being in the History of Recorded Time Award. Sponsored by Top Rank.
- Some jackass promoter will come up with the idea to put Betty White in a bikini and make her a round-card girl for a night. The police will find his body six months later in a dumpster behind a Taco Bell.
- Victor Ortiz will surprise some people. Andre Berto too. And Tavoris Cloud.
- Chris Arreola will say he's finally serious about getting in shape. A lie.
- Some guy who had a couple hundred fights 70 years ago and was a hell of a good fighter will drop dead in a nursing home and almost no one will remember him or care. It'll be a shame.
- David Haye will call the Klitschko brothers "sissies" and "momma's boys" in a YouTube video and then sign to face come-backing Brian Nielson in Denmark.
- There will be several wonderful fights on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* and some really awful ones involving recent Olympians against dishwashers and roofers. Teddy Atlas will be outraged.
- Tim Bradley will embarrass Devon Alexander.
- Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao will tangle. It will break all the records. The undercard will suck.
- HBO's Ross Greenburg will decide that nobody cares about super middleweights or bantam-



"VICIOUS" SMILE
Hard-hitting Victor Ortiz has reestablished himself with four wins since losing to Marcos Maidana and just might surprise a lot of people in 2011.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

What Went Right: Showtime didn't abandon the Super Six tourney. By showing the same wonderful stubbornness that has kept the under-appreciated *ShoBox* on the air all these years, Ken Hershman didn't panic when Mikkel Kessler bailed. He kept his cool again when Andre Dirrell abandoned ship. He convinced Glen Johnson, who hadn't fought at 168 in 10 years, to join the tournament and flatten Allan Green and even got Sakio Bika to step in for Dirrell and face Andre Ward—even if it is outside the tournament. If only everyone in boxing was so hard to discourage.

2011

weights anymore and vows to never have any on HBO ever again. When a reporter asks if this is in response to Showtime's tournaments, Greenburg will reply: "What's a Showtime?"

- Some web writer will claim Manny Pacquiao would have beaten Joe Louis. Everyone will agree.
- Lou DiBella will say the "F" word a lot.
- Manny Pacquiao will win a Grammy at The Latin Grammy Awards. No one will care that he's not Latin.
- Miguel Cotto and Vanes Martirosyan will put on a candidate for Fight of the Year.
- Oscar De La Hoya will send boxing writers scrambling to their laptops when he tells a reporter that Golden Boy Promotions plans to take over administration of The World Bank. Well, not take it over, exactly. Just run it. Well, not run it. Just, you know, take care of it.
- Richard Schaefer will read the item above and spit cranberry juice all over his Blackberry.
- A lot of slow learners will continue to express amazement when a good smaller fighter beats a less skilled bigger fighter.
- It will be the best year boxing has had in many years. The mainstream media will act surprised at the sport's resilience. Again.
- In his first fight since losing to Manny Pacquiao, Antonio Margarito will score a kayo win in Guadalajara, Mexico. When the referee raises his hand, the rear end of a 1972 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme will drop out of his left glove. Bob Arum will call for an investigation into who planted the rear end of a 1972 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme in his fighter's glove.
- Manny Pacquiao will continue to pretend that Juan Manuel Marquez doesn't exist. No one will care.
- A couple more old-timers who are in the Hall of Fame and deserve to be there will die. We'll try not to think about it.
- Still smarting from his crossover loss to MMA star Randy Couture, James Toney will enter a hot dog-eating contest in Coney Island, New York. He will place third but will be disqualified afterward for calling the other contestants "bitch-asses" during the post-contest interview. ESPN will televise.
- The WBA will announce the formation of a subcommittee dedicated to keeping track of all its champions. The group will be funded by sanctioning fees and headed by Gilberto Mendoza's nephew.
- We'll still miss Arturo Gatti.
- Mike Jones will lose. Badly.
- Explaining his decision to not air any fights in May, HBO's Ross Greenburg will tell reporters that everyone knows April showers bring May flowers and no one wants to watch fights when there are flowers coming up all over the place.
- Fight writers everywhere will continue to write "notoriety" when they mean "fame."
- Zab Judah will lose a big fight. Six months later, he'll tell the fight press he's coming back matured and more dedicated, owing to his conversion to the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster. Stories about the new, more mature Zab Judah will flood the World Wide Web.

—W.D.

What It Means for 2011: Only good things—more good fights at super middleweight, another chance for Johnson, one of the really great old fighters of his era, and a chance down the road for the winner of the tournament—presumably Andre Ward—to face Lucain Bute for all the marbles, now that Bute has signed a deal with Showtime. Folks, if you don't get the picture by now, we'll spell it out for you: Things are looking up. ■

"JuanMa" Makes Marquez Quit

BRING ON GAMBOA!

By Don Stradley • Photos By Naoki Fukuda

In most sports, an athlete's signature moment is when he wins a championship. Sure, there are many athletes who are famous and make a lot of money, and they might even win an MVP award or a batting title, and they certainly feel like stars. But until you've had champagne poured over your head while Bob Costas sticks a microphone in your face, you're not quite at the elite level. You may not even have a bobblehead doll with your face on it.

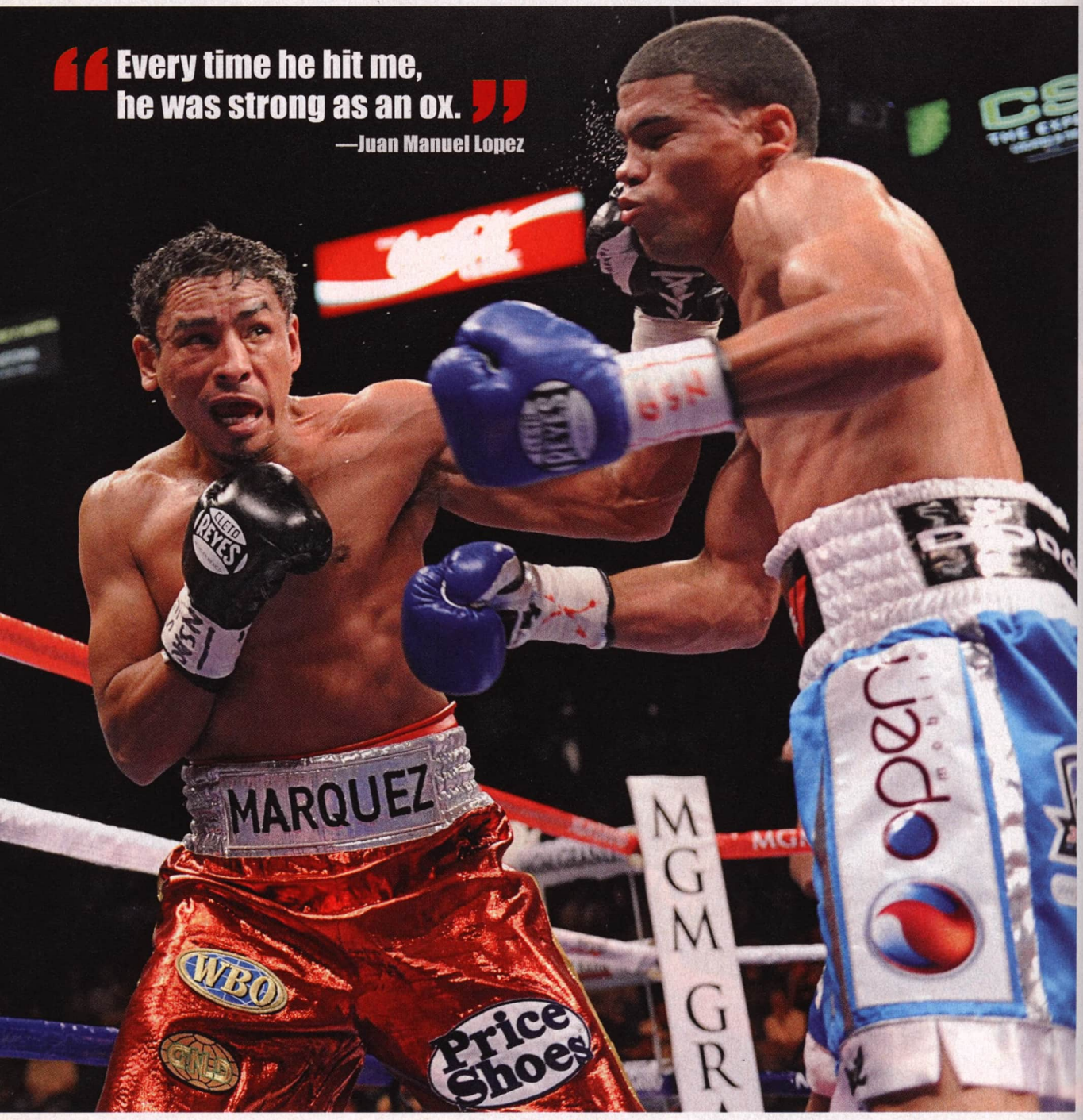
In one of the many ways that boxing is different than other sports, winning a title or even the world championship isn't necessarily a fighter's signature moment. It's nice to win a belt and even one of those trinkets handed out by alphabet groups probably looks good in a trophy case, but chances are you're still fairly anonymous outside of boxing circles. Your friends and family will always call you "champ," but beyond that, you may still be fighting on a more famous fighter's undercard. In boxing, you may not get

noticed until you've beaten a big name opponent.

Case in point: Marvelous Marvin Hagler won the middleweight championship in 1980, but his signature moment wasn't until 1985 when he kayoed Tommy Hearns in the Fight of the Year. Want another? Bernard Hopkins was a respected titlist for years, but didn't get his full due until he stopped Felix Trinidad in 2001. Floyd Mayweather was long considered the pound-for-pound best, but it wasn't until he defeated Oscar De La Hoya that the world beyond HBO started paying attention to him.

It was thought that a win over Rafael Marquez would help Juan Manuel Lopez towards getting that kind of recognition. Marquez was the sort of "signature opponent" that would make nonbelievers give Lopez a second look. We all knew Lopez had crazy punching power, but we wondered about his durability. If anyone could capitalize on Lopez' defensive lapses, it would be a veteran bomber like Marquez. Although Marquez was giving away eight years in age and was still relatively new at featherweight, he was still the best fighter Lopez had ever faced.

Of course, we all know what happened: Marquez put up a spirited battle but bowed



GALLANT STAND
Marquez was more than willing to trade with Lopez and wobbled his Puerto Rican rival several times with left hooks. But Lopez, who has been floored a number of times in the past, stayed upright throughout the Mexican's onslaught.

ON TARGET
Lopez rams a southpaw jab between Marquez' guard and into his face. Although the combatants are approximately the same height and have similar reaches, "JuanMa" always looked larger than his adversary.

out after the eighth with a shoulder injury. When it was over, Lopez collapsed to the canvas and held his blue gloves to the heavens, emotionally spent. This was his big night, his coronation. From here on in, "JuanMa" would be synonymous with big paydays, stardom, and glamour. Any questions about him had been shattered by the sheer force of his punches.

Unfortunately, it's not that easy. We hate to break the news to Lopez, because we've enjoyed his work this year. But sometimes a signature moment isn't a signature moment. Sometimes it's just another win.

It's not Lopez' fault that the Marquez fight didn't finish according to the script. We knew Marquez as a never-say-die brawler who fought until the entire arena was spattered with blood. We knew him as a proud Mexican warrior with a knockout kick in both hands and as the younger half of one of the great brother acts in boxing history. Even though Marquez was considered an underdog, few would guess he'd get a hitch in his shoulder and quit.

Most of us imagined Lopez-Marquez, which was televised by Showtime, would play out like a violent video game, with each fighter going down once or twice. We imagined fans brawling in the audience and setting fire to the MGM Grand. We imagined promoters Bob Arum and Gary Shaw attacking each other with tire tools in the parking lot. We imagined those compulsive list makers who haunt boxing message boards making room for Lopez-Marquez on their all-time fight lists.

At the very least, we were looking for a Fight of the Year candidate. What we got instead was a good fight marred by an unsatisfactory ending. But Lopez did what he had to do, and, aside from the little temper tantrum he threw when referee Tony Weeks warned him for holding and hitting, he looked good.

From the opening bell, Lopez, 125½, stalked Marquez like a panther cornering his prey, keeping the older fighter moving backwards. When Marquez, 125½, stood his ground and gallantly traded punches, Lopez got the best of the exchanges. Lopez withstood some rocky moments in the fourth and fifth rounds, including one shot to the jaw that buckled his knees and made his eyes glaze over. But Lopez pounded his gloves together and goaded Marquez to come forward and fight.

Lopez was in total control during the seventh and eighth rounds, herding Marquez along the ropes and landing several heavy shots to the head. Marquez didn't come out for the ninth. Instead, he pointed to his shoulder and said he couldn't continue.

Whether Marquez had a serious injury or was simply looking for a way out is open to debate. He claimed to have injured his shoulder in an early round, but he'd been throwing his right hand consistently up until the end. Marquez is well-liked in the business; no one wants to think the worst. According to Lopez, it was a tough night.

"It was a real tough fight," Lopez told the postfight press gathering. "He hit me good in the fourth round. So what? It showed everyone that I can come back and that I can take a punch."

Lopez added, "Marquez is a great warrior. A lot of people thought he was done. He didn't look done to me. He was a great opponent to show that I can do a lot of different things. It showed that I could take a punch, box well, and punch hard. Today, I showed that I belong in the elite of the division."

Lopez, 30-0 (27), is in a good spot. He's 27, undefeated, and has a growing fanbase, especially among Puerto Rican fans. He no longer has to fight on Miguel Cotto undercards or be in co-main events with Yuriorkis Gamboa. But that doesn't mean there are no more questions. For instance …

1. Is Lopez' chin still an issue?

Lopez' ability to take a punch was a popular subject prior to the bout, and, when Marquez buzzed him with a pair of mean left hooks in the fourth, it looked like Lopez might fall. But hell, that's what makes him a fun fighter to watch.

It's certainly not a knock on Lopez that Marquez wobbled him for Marquez has

wobbled many men who get hit in the head at the professional level. Lopez managed to stay on his feet after Marquez nailed him, which means one of three things. Either Lopez had steeled himself to stay upright (which means he's getting tougher), that Lopez has grown more comfortable at 126 (this was his third consecutive fight at the weight; he certainly looked more filled out), or Marquez, a 35-year-old former bantamweight, didn't bring his punch up to 126.

As Lopez tried to recover, though, he fouled Marquez. This resulted in Weeks stopping the action to lay a one-point penalty on Lopez, which gave the Puerto Rican ample time to regain his senses. Marquez' Mexican promoter, Fernando Beltran, believed that an injustice had occurred.

"In the 4th round, Rafael hurt him," said Beltran. "Then, Tony Weeks takes a point away from Lopez and gives him 40-50 seconds to recover. Christmas came early for them."

Beltran wasn't wrong. But whether Marquez could've finished off Lopez at the time is questionable. Marquez seemed off his game that night, which brings up another question.

2. Did Marquez have anything left after his four bouts with Israel Vazquez?

According to Lopez, he did. "Every time he hit me, he was strong as an ox," Lopez told the Associated Press.

Marquez, though, seemed to have balance problems all night. He was lunging and having trouble planting his feet. Some of this was because Lopez was constantly coming forward, but it was also because Marquez, 39-6 (35), didn't seem to have his legs under him from the start. A thumb injury in training, a shoulder injury during the bout, and no legs: These are the signs of a 35-year-old fighter who is coming apart. Had the fight lasted another round or two, Marquez would have been flattened.

3. Should there be a rematch?

Both fighters said they wanted one, but a rematch would yield the same result. Besides, there were fewer than 5,000 people at the MGM Grand to see Lopez-Marquez. You can blame the economy or the fact that Manny Pacquiao was fighting Antonio Margarito a week later in Texas, but you can't deny that Lopez-Marquez drew poorly in Las Vegas.

4. If it wasn't the Fight of the Year, is Lopez at least the Fighter of the Year?

Lopez had as good a year as anyone, stopping Steve Luevano to win the WBO

RAFAEL ROCKED
Although there were a number of torrid exchanges, Lopez generally got the better of them. It's difficult to say how much his brutal quartet of bouts with Israel Vazquez had taken out of Marquez, but at 35 he's not the fighter he once was.

featherweight title back in January, and then defending against Bernabe Concepcion and Marquez in exciting bouts. So far, no fighters really stood out in 2010, so Lopez has a reasonable chance to be THE RING's Fighter of the Year. He's certainly been this year's top thrill machine. But they fought on November 6, which means there was almost two months remaining in the year before a final judgment can be made.

5. Was beating Marquez a signature win or not?

Lopez' supporters may believe so, but Marquez had never been a dominant factor at 126 and has now lost three of his last five bouts. It was a nice win, but the real signature opponent for Lopez may still be Yuriorkis Gamboa

Gamboa provides, along with Lopez, a nice pair of bookends for the 126-pound class. They're like the two leaders of rival gangs, respectful of each other but knowing

HANGING WITH A LEGEND

Retired Puerto Rican boxing icon Felix "Tito" Trinidad was on hand in Las Vegas to watch his country's latest hero score his most significant victory to date. Lopez knows that he still has a lot to accomplish to reach Trinidad's level of fame.

that one day they'll meet in violent fashion. True, Marquez was a name, but a weather-beaten one. Gamboa and Lopez are the young guns of the division, and that's exciting. You might argue that Gamboa hasn't beaten anyone of Marquez' quality, and you'd have a case. But that doesn't make Lopez-Gamboa any less intriguing.

Lopez and Gamboa happen also to be THE RING's number one and two ranked featherweights, adding to the allure of their meeting, for the victor would be recognized as THE RING's featherweight champion. But beyond Gamboa, there aren't many featherweights that would create much interest for Lopez. It would be intriguing to see slick Chris John, the WBA titlist and THE RING's number-three ranked featherweight, try to handle Lopez' power, but it's not a fight that fans are dying to see. WBC titlist Elio Rojas is scrappy, but his name isn't well-known.

If Lopez wants to set the turnstiles spinning and buy more shiny cars, he may have to look elsewhere. Lopez thinks the answer resides several pounds north.

"If the rematch goes on, then after beating Rafael again, I would love to fight Juan Manual Marquez," Lopez told Philboxing.com. "Maybe he can come down to 130 pounds and we can get it on. I only want to fight the best and that should be a good story, fighting the Marquez brothers. I really want to fight Juan Manuel at 130."

A battle of the Juan Manuels at catchweight isn't likely, but it says a lot about Lopez' mindset. He wants big names and big money. His confidence is growing, and he wants to take on the world. That's a good sign. Lopez may not have Bob Costas in his future, but, if he keeps battering opponents, a bobble-head doll is a distinct possibility. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

THE PUNCH THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

Martinez Kayo Of Williams Boosts "Maravilla" To Superstar Status

By Joseph Santoliquito

The expression said it all—the furrowed forehead and wincing eyes. Sergio Martinez just looked at his trainer, Gabriel Sarmiento, uncertain if he heard him correctly. It was just two days before Martinez would defend the world middleweight championship in a rematch against Paul Williams.

"You want me to do what?" Martinez said laughing, as he recalled Sarmiento's scheme. "Scrap everything we've been working on the last two months for a whole new plan of attack, two days before the fight!"

Just a few inches to the left and a step backward was all Sarmiento was asking for. He'd figured out a move that would provide Martinez an open corridor to land the kind of one-punch knockout that changes careers and lives.

Rocky Marciano froze time against Jersey Joe Walcott with his "Suzy Q," Sugar Ray Robinson's electrifying left hook shook the boxing world and the granite chin of Gene Fullmer, and now Martinez has sent a jolt heard throughout boxing when he smashed Williams with his "boloda punch," which in Martinez' native Argentina means swing punch.

Martinez' perfect left to Williams' jaw catapulted "Maravilla" from star status to superstar. It elevated him from someone who had to kowtow to the demands of Williams' team in order to get the rematch, despite Martinez being the middleweight world champion, to the marquee level of a pay-per-view fighter.

His wonderful swing even garnered crossover appeal. Martinez' knockout blow was ESPN's number-six sports highlight of the week, where the "Worldwide Leader In Sports" rarely singles out boxing, especially during a hot period when the NFL, NHL, NBA, and major college football are all competing.

A few days after vanquishing Williams, without hardly a scratch on his face, Martinez, 46-2-2 (25), was able to bask in

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

the delight of doing something few thought he could accomplish. The 35-year-old, 13-year ring veteran has had 50 career fights, but he may be most remembered for disconnecting Williams' brain circuits at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall in late November.

"I'll tell you this, it was the most important punch of my entire life up until now," said Martinez, through interpreter Cicilio Flores, Martinez' assistant trainer. "The way I looked at this fight was Paul Williams was the most important fighter and toughest fight of my career. I had to do something. I was extremely confident I would stop him.

"I work on that punch all the time. It's my favorite punch. But it wasn't a left hook, or a left cross, or an overhand left I hit him with. I hit him with one of my personal favorite punches that I throw. I think it was called the boloda punch in Spanish, which means a swing punch in Argentina. I would love to call it the 'Sergio Martinez punch.' I'll remember it as the punch that got me to where I am today, and I'm very grateful that it happened. I know I'll definitely be recognized for that punch—but I have bigger things to accomplish in life—I have a lot more to prove."

Boxing has been missing the one-punch knockout in major fights. But when it happens, it's memorable. Think about Manny Pacquiao's crushing second-round knockout of Ricky Hatton, Marciano, down on points, landing the historical, disfiguring blow on Walcott's chin to win the heavyweight championship in the 13th round, or the time Mike Tyson sent Trevor Berbick stumbling down three times from one punch to become the youngest heavyweight titlist in boxing history.

And who could forget George Foreman's wonderful chin music he played on Michael Moorer to become the oldest heavyweight champion in boxing history.

All one-punch knockouts resonate. They're seductive. They're indelible. They're magnetic. They're like the stunningly beautiful woman you see walking down the street and can't keep out of your mind.

"I think it's one of the biggest problems with boxing today is that fighters aren't getting knockouts, I mean, clear, clean knockouts," said Hall of Fame trainer Emanuel Steward, who provided the color commentary for the Mar-

AS PLANNED
Martinez lands the right hand just the way he and his trainer planned. The last-minute change in strategy worked perfectly and gave Martinez a career-changing, one-punch knockout.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

tinez-Williams rematch on the HBO telecast. "It's what's missing with the fans and keeping their excitement up. It's something we're seeing in other sports. In baseball, hitters aren't hitting as many homeruns, and, in boxing, people aren't seeing as many knockouts in championship fights.

"It's been a long time since I've seen anything like I saw Martinez do against Williams. Boxing was in dire need of that—but Paul was trying to be aggressive, and Martinez noticed something about Williams against [Kermit] Cintron—and that was to force Williams backwards. A big, tall guy can't fight backing up because they get caught backing up and get caught off balance. Tommy Hearns was the exception. It's still very rare, though. I want to see more of it. I know the fans want to see more one-punch knockouts."

Marciano was building toward stardom in September 1952 when he met Walcott at Philadelphia's Municipal Stadium but still wore the tag of a crude slugger. He had stopped his previous seven opponents but had never stepped in with someone of Walcott's caliber. For the first 12 rounds, it showed, as the wily Walcott kept "The Brockton Blockbuster" at a safe distance and scored on the shorter, easy-to-hit Marciano.

Marciano, dropped by Walcott in the first round, was in a desperate state, trailing 7-4-1, 7-5, and 8-4 on the scorecards. That's when he unfurled the pulverizing right cross that made his career, nailing Walcott and capturing the heavyweight title.

Robinson was already a superstar when he met Fullmer in May 1957. Like Martinez, Robinson's classic punch came in a rematch. And like Martinez, Robinson stopped a fighter who had never been knocked out before.

Robinson set up Fullmer with a steady diet of rights before he snapped off the left hook. When he did, he hit Fullmer so hard, that after he regained consciousness, Fullmer returned to his corner and asked his trainer why the fight was stopped. Williams, 39-2 (27), did no such thing. He knew he was knocked out.

"I didn't see the punch. It came from nowhere," said a somewhat groggy Williams outside his locker room after the fight. "I thought I was doing pretty well in the second round. I found my distance and was catching [Martinez] as he was coming

KING OF THE MIDDLEWEIGHTS
A delighted Martinez displays his belts following his spectacular kayo of Williams. For a 35-year-old, 13-year veteran, it was sweet redemption and the start of his status as a superstar.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

SERGIO'S HIT LIST

It's routine after a big victory that fighters are immediately asked: "Who's next?" Here is a list of candidates that Martinez commented on while talking to THE RING.

Manny Pacquiao The pound-for-pound king was the first fighter many media types threw out there, and, in some circles, it makes sense, while others believe Martinez is simply too big for "Pac-Man." Pacquiao would fight King Kong if he had the chance, so it's not him who would prevent it from happening. As for Martinez, "That's a fight I know would be a boxing fan's dream to watch. I think everyone would want to see that fight, and it would be great for boxing. But it's very difficult to make that fight happen. Bob Arum wouldn't allow that fight to take place. He might think I'm too big for Pacquiao, but it's sure a fight I would like to have." Another stumbling block is Martinez is not a Top Rank fighter, which is all Arum seems to be putting in against Pac-Man.

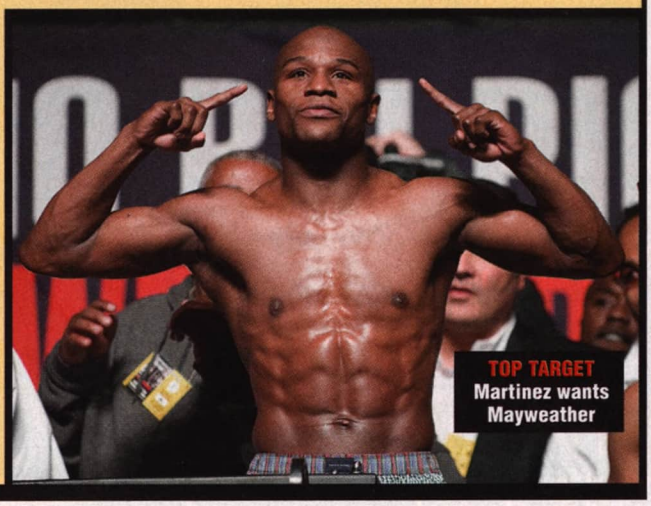
Antonio Margarito "Why would I do that again?" asked Martinez, who suffered one of his two pro defeats to Margarito, losing by seventh-round stoppage in February 2000. "Look where I am in my career, and look where he is. Margarito is on his way out, and I don't want to be the one who retires him."

Kermit Cintron "Absolutely not," said Martinez, who fought a controversial draw with Cintron in February 2009. "I had a bad experience the first time we fought, and he never gave me a rematch."

Dmitry Pirog Though he carries big clout in his punches, the one major drawback is the box-office clout the Russian lacks. It's a fan-friendly fight that makes sense, but not the kind of fight from which Martinez can benefit.

Floyd Mayweather If Martinez wants someone, it's "Pretty Boy." Martinez feels he's the perfect opponent for Mayweather, "because I'll be there to be hit, but I think I'm fast enough to hit him. Yes, this is the fight that I want most. It's absolutely every fighter's dream to fight Mayweather—and I have something he wants—the middleweight championship of the world." The one glaring area of concern is Mayweather's pending legal situation, coupled with the remote possibility he signs a deal to fight Pacquiao.

—J.S.



TOP TARGET
Martinez wants Mayweather

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHT WIRE IMAGES

in. He was more aggressive than he was the first time, and I tried to be aggressive too. I just got caught at the wrong time, and I don't know what hit me. But I'll be back. All champions come back from things like this."

According to Team Martinez, the first fight actually set up the knockout in the second fight. Sarmiento must have reviewed the tape of the first fight a few hundred times, wondering how Williams was holding up against the punishment Martinez inflicted.

"We finished the job of what we did the first fight," Sarmiento said. "We knew we won that first fight because we were wondering what was keeping Paul Williams up. At the end of the fight, it was damn close, we at worst thought it would be a draw, it had to be a freakin' draw. Both fighters lost a little that night, but Williams lost more. We saw that when he fought Kermit Cintron.

"That's why we decided to change our plans for the rematch. The timing wasn't the best. I was looking at the Williams' fight with Cintron and saw something. I was so excited about it I couldn't sleep Wednesday night. I had to tell Sergio, I had to tell him. I wrote down everything. It was nerve wracking waiting that whole night to tell Sergio. If we executed the first round, if we executed the second round, there would be no third round. I did think Sergio could do it—so I can't say it was a lucky punch. That's the way I saw it. We had it all planned."

But the plan needed a practitioner—and Martinez wasn't exactly a willing one at first.

"I remember looking at Gabby like he was crazy," Martinez recalled, with a great belly laugh. "We were working on something for two months to get ready for this fight, and he literally changed everything in a day. It seemed crazy. But I trust Gabby, and he broke it down and showed me what he saw: That when Williams came forward and threw his left, his head was out there before his body. I was grateful I listened to Gabby. It worked."

In getting the Williams rematch, Martinez was willing to bend to numerous demands—and he was the defending RING middleweight world champion—such as the 158-pound catchweight, and the slight of being announced first. World champions are never announced first. Maravilla wore a smile, though inside he was boiling. Someone was going to have to pay.

"The Williams people didn't want to give me the spotlight that I thought I deserved," Martinez said. "Their demands were simple, little childish things, and they attempted very hard to take something away from me that I worked my whole life to get. Listen, I came from a hard background. I've been through many things in my life, so this was like water off my back if it meant getting Williams in the ring again.

"It comes down to this: Everything is in its proper order today. Everything worked out the way it was supposed to work out because of that punch. I'm calling that punch my justice punch."

Justice came served with a thud. ■

THE SUPER SUB

41-Year-Old Glen Johnson Pumps New Life Into The Super Six

By Eric Raskin

Glen Johnson is not the most talked about 41-year-old in professional sports. As long as there's a guy out there playing quarterback for the Minnesota Vikings who distributes touchdowns, interceptions, retirement speeches, and photos of his genitals in equal measure, Johnson will never hold the title of sport's most buzzed-about star born in 1969.

In truth, other than the year they were born and their comparably amazing ability to compete 41 years later, Johnson and Brett Favre have nothing in common. And that's an observation that Johnson ought to take as a compliment.

The former light heavyweight champion doesn't have to worry about sexting scandals or being reviled by scorned former fanbases. When the boxing world talks about Glen Johnson, it's not to debate whether he should retire or to debate whether we're all sick and tired of talking about him. Johnson gets talked about for all the right reasons. He gets talked about because he was never supposed to be this relevant for this long, but, somehow, he keeps climbing into the ring and fighting in a manner that makes him relevant.

His latest achievement in that regard came on November 6 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, when he became the first fighter to knock out Allan Green, a world-class boxer a decade his junior. As a stand-alone fight, that's a quality accomplishment for a guy in his fifth decade on this earth. But it wasn't a stand-alone fight. It was part of Showtime's "Super Six World Boxing Classic," and for a tournament that had mostly been taking shots on the chin lately, Johnson's victory was a shot in the arm.

Two months earlier, Johnson was a light heavyweight contender coming off a loss and wondering if he was done receiving significant opportunities. By beating Green, he suddenly became a super middleweight contender moving on to the semifinals of a tournament he joined more than a year after it began. The Super Six was an event originally built around relative youth (average age at the start: 28.8) and glittering

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

OLDIE BUT GOODIE
Referee Robert Byrd points Johnson to a neutral corner after "The Road Warrior" flattened Green with a pair of right hands for an eighth-round TKO victory, which earned Johnson a semifinal spot in Showtime's "Super Six" tournament.

records (four losses total among six fighters). And here was a fighter nearing his 42nd birthday, with a glitter-free record of 51-14-2 (35), helping to revive interest in the tournament as it transitioned from the round-robin stage to the single-elimination portion.

Maybe we've lost perspective as a result of what Bernard Hopkins has done in his 40s, but the boxing world needs to pause and appreciate how amazing it is what Johnson is pulling off. Here's what he's done since turning 35: finally won his first alphabet title, knocked out Roy Jones (when it still meant something), defeated Antonio Tarver, earned a RING championship and a RING Fighter of the Year award, fought essentially even-up with undefeated twentysomethings Chad Dawson and Tavoris Cloud, and then moved *down* in weight, returning to a division he left nine years before, to knock Green out. It's really a remarkable run for an old man.

And Johnson is as surprised by it as anyone.

"I really didn't imagine five years ago or 10 years ago that I would be fighting at this age," Johnson said, "but I'm just thankful that I feel the way I feel and I'm still able to do it as well as I do it. I don't feel like I'm slowing down. I don't feel any reason to retire. Like I keep telling people who ask if I might retire soon, I don't think this is the way somebody's supposed to feel when it's time for them to leave. I mean, either you retire because you want to retire or you retire because you can't do it anymore. And I don't have either one of those feelings.

"I don't know what it is, if it's simply because I don't abuse my body by drinking and smoking and partying, or if it's just good genetics, or a combination of those things, but I'm just blessed. Whatever it is, I'm just grateful, and I'm going along for the ride."

Hopkins, who kayoed Johnson in 1997 and remains the only fighter to do so, thinks the way the Jamaican-born, Miami-based warrior has taken care of his body has been the key to his success.

"I'm not surprised Glen won the fight against Green because he lives a clean lifestyle," the 45-year-old Hopkins said. "I'm glad to see him proving to the world that 40 is the new 30—if only for me and for him."

What's remarkable about Johnson, in comparison to Hopkins, is that Johnson is a pressure fighter who takes his share of punches and engaging in entertaining, sometimes grueling, action fights, whereas "The Executioner" fights in a low-contact style that helps to preserve his physical capabilities. Those guys often find themselves burned out by age 30, never mind 40. Ricky Hatton was done at 30. Juan Diaz is 27 and appears just about spent. Jeff Fenech was essentially used up by 28. Going back much farther, Terry McGovern's best days all came before the age of 25. And here's Johnson at 41, still bullying the young guys.

Part of the reason he's pulling it off is that, when you pay careful attention, you see there's some cleverness mixed in with his doggedness. He holds his gloves up high and takes opponents' jabs away. He doesn't waste punches. He moves his head more than you realize at first glance. Don't get us wrong; nobody's calling him the new Willie Pep or anything. But Johnson definitely has more than one dimension and more than one gear. And the full subtle array of skills was on display against Green.

Johnson, 167, came right out for the opening round against his friend and former sparring partner with a hop in his step, applying pressure, using his jab, and going to the body. Importantly, he didn't appear to be at any disadvantage in hand speed as he sometimes is against younger foes. About midway through the opening round, Johnson scored with an overhand right to the jaw not unlike the one that famously put Roy Jones to sleep.

But Green, 168, bounced back from a shaky first round to win the second, scoring with an assortment of softer punches designed just to tally points. The problem for him was, even if he earned a 10-9 round, he was moving backward throughout, and his jab wasn't bothering Johnson.

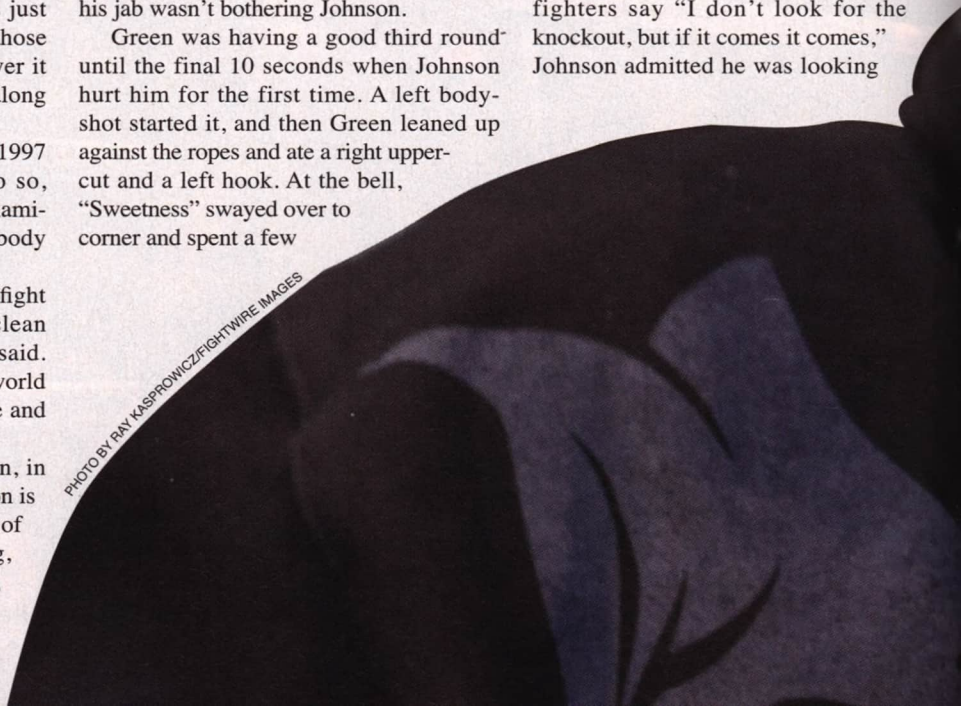
Green was having a good third round until the final 10 seconds when Johnson hurt him for the first time. A left body-shot started it, and then Green leaned up against the ropes and ate a right uppercut and a left hook. At the bell, "Sweetness" swayed over to corner and spent a few seconds leaning awkwardly on the ropes before slumping to his stool. Now Green knew: Johnson could hurt him. More likely, he knew Johnson *would* hurt him.

Green held a lot in the fourth as he waited for his brain to unscramble, so Johnson took what was given and pounded the body with whichever hand he could break free. Johnson dominated the sixth round, taking the unusual approach of leading with powershots to the body. The seventh was the most entertaining round of the fight, as Green's legs were wearing down and he had to stand and trade, creating compelling two-way inside warfare.

But there would be no more two-way action after that. Just 20 seconds into round eight, as Green leaned to his right, Johnson swung a crushing right cross at his noggin, then scored with another right as the Tulsa, Oklahoma, native was falling to the canvas. Green went down hard on his face, quickly rolled over, and then started complaining to referee Robert Byrd that he'd been hit in the back of the head. But Byrd just kept counting. At eight, Green, 29-3 (20), was on his feet but still had both gloves on the mat, and he finally lifted them off as Byrd tolled 10 and waved the fight over at 0:36 of the round.

Green's protests continued long after—he even filed a formal protest to get the result changed because he felt he was knocked out by an illegal blow—but unfortunately for him, this was about as controversy-free as a knockout punch gets. If it landed slightly behind the ear, it was only because that was the target Green presented when he hunched over.

Interestingly, whereas we often hear fighters say "I don't look for the knockout, but if it comes it comes," Johnson admitted he was looking



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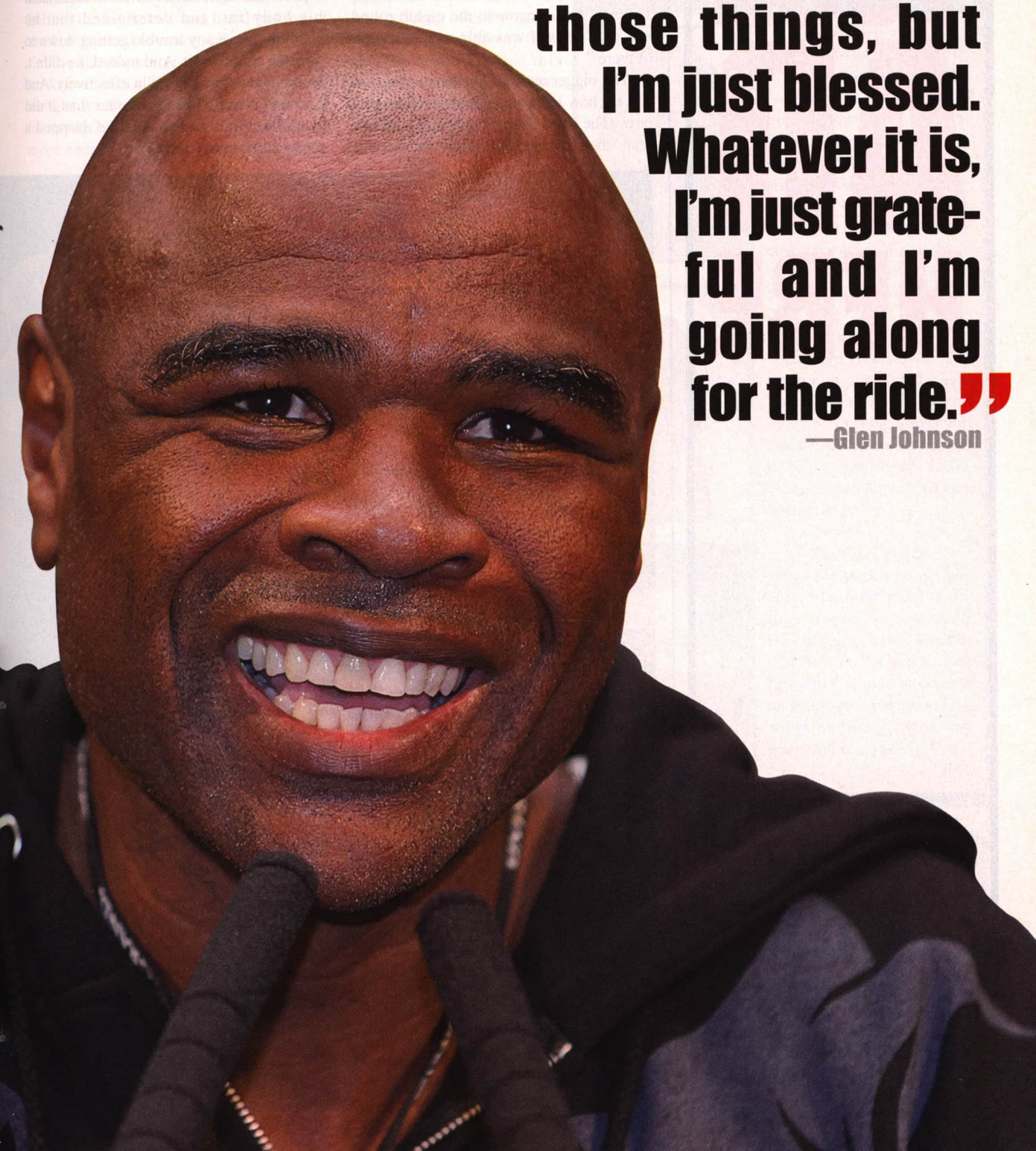

"I don't know what it is, if it's simply because I don't abuse my body by drinking and smoking and partying, or if it's just good genetics, or a combination of those things, but I'm just blessed. Whatever it is, I'm just grateful and I'm going along for the ride."

—Glen Johnson

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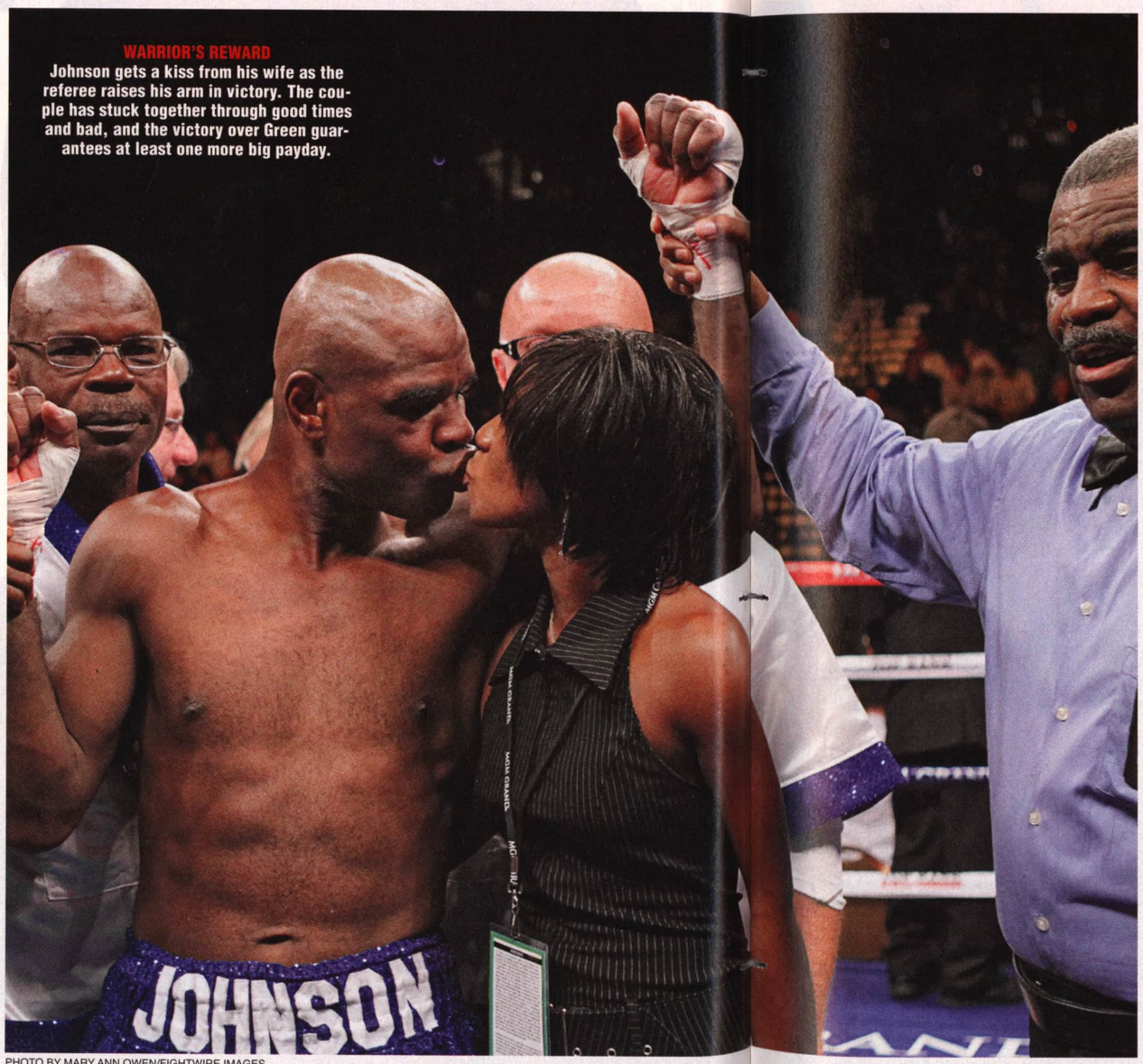
for the knockout all night because he didn't want to let it go to a decision.

"Once the bell rang and the fight started, I saw that he was making a lot of mistakes that I could capitalize on," Johnson said. "I knew I needed to get him in the right position. He would change spacing; he would either slide out or drift just enough out of my reach or try to smother and move in, so I figured, *Okay, I just have to be patient, wait for the right time and the right spacing*. And it came in the eighth round, and that's how I was able to get him out of there."

The bigger question for many observers was not how Johnson got him out of there but how "The Road Warrior" got down there—with "there" being 168 pounds. Johnson had weighed between 172 and 178½ pounds for his previous 20 fights.

But when the opportunity to replace the (supposedly) injured Mikkel Kessler in the Super Six came along, Johnson didn't have to think about it very long. He was already confident he could get back down to super middle because he'd seen his nutritionist, Unni Greene from South Miami Fitness, about that very topic just a few weeks earlier. She ran a series of tests, calculated his body fat, and determined that he shouldn't have any trouble getting down to the 168-pound limit. And indeed, he didn't. He trained hard and fought effectively. And his body sure looked a lot better than it did in his previous fight, when he dropped a close decision to Cloud.



WARRIOR'S REWARD
Johnson gets a kiss from his wife as the referee raises his arm in victory. The couple has stuck together through good times and bad, and the victory over Green guarantees at least one more big payday.

PHOTO BY MARY ANN OWEN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

With Johnson looking unusually soft around the middle for that fight, speculation was rampant that he hadn't had his greatest training camp, and he confirmed that after the Green fight.

"Condition-wise and performance-wise, I was in shape, but certainly my body wasn't as cut up as it could have been. I think I kind of took it for granted that I'd made 175 pounds for so long and so easily, and then, in terms of the time frame, I got behind the eight ball and I had to kind of crash at the end to make weight."

For the Green fight at 168 pounds, he knew he couldn't slack off to make weight, and the result wasn't just that his body looked better, but that he had more energy in the ring. Many folks have speculated that Johnson has been slowing down ever so slightly over the last couple years. It sure didn't look that way on this night.

And as a result of how well Johnson fought, the eighth contestant to enter the Super Six is now among the final four. He earned three points for the knockout win, and heading into the Arthur Abraham-Carl Froch fight that took place after this magazine's deadline, it was possible for Johnson to fight Froch, Abraham, or Andre Ward in the semifinals. All we knew for sure was that Johnson eliminated the possibility of Showtime's worst-case scenario—a rematch to the one-sided Ward-Green fight—and increased the likelihood that at least one of the semifinals will be entertaining.

"I knew what we had in Glen Johnson. I knew from the moment he came in that he'd bring a new level of excitement to the tournament," said Showtime boxing boss Ken Hershman. "Now, did I know that he'd kayo Allan Green and invigorate the boxing world? No, but he did just that … Glen Johnson is a man who has endeared himself to boxing fans with his courageous style and gentle personality. I am really excited to see what lies ahead, and I think the fans are too."

You can't go terribly wrong with any scenario in terms of who wins the tournament. Abraham and Froch are both compelling personalities and fan-friendly fighters. Ward is emerging as possibly the best under-30 fighter in America. But the best human-interest storyline would be a Johnson victory. It's the boxing equivalent of Cody Ross getting plucked off the scrap heap by the San Francisco Giants and becoming a postseason hero.

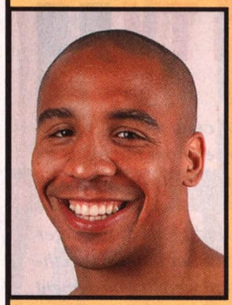
And it only works because Johnson is such a sentimental favorite. If he were a cocky punk who entered the tournament at the last minute, nobody would be rooting for him. But he's quite the opposite of cocky. He's as classy a figure as you'll find in the sport. As Showtime analyst Al Bernstein said, "If you don't like Glen Johnson, you don't like people."

If you're a family member of Ward, Abraham, or Froch, maybe you can justify rooting against Johnson. Otherwise, it's damned near impossible.

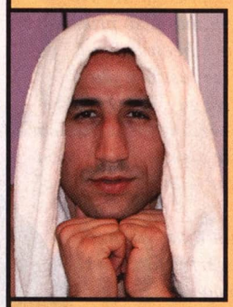
One minute, he wasn't a part of the Super Six at all. The next minute, he just might be the best thing about it. ■

The Super Six's Other Three

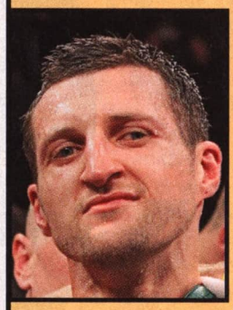
Here's what Johnson had to say about the other three fighters who've made the Super Six's final four:



On Andre Ward
"I certainly believe that he's the most skilled. Against him, I would have to put a lot of thought into how to beat him—more than I would with the other fighters in the Super Six. You have to cover all your bases. He has speed, he has movement, and he has a lot of talent. I really think that Ward is the most complete boxer in the Super Six."



On Arthur Abraham
"Abraham is a slower guy, more of a puncher. If I fight him, I have to be concerned with his punching power. But I know that he's not going to be overwhelmingly active. That's something I could take advantage of."



On Carl Froch
"He's basically a tough guy. He's wide-open most of the time to get hit, so landing punches against him won't be that difficult. But you have to figure out how to overcome his tough-guy attitude and the rough-and-tough, anything-goes kind of style."

—E.R.

"I Believe We Put On The Best Boxing On TV"

He likes to be just left of center stage. You'll read and hear much more about the fights he puts on than about him. That's the way Ken Hershman prefers it.

The executive vice president and general manager of Showtime Sports was instrumental in putting together the "Super Six," the super middleweight tournament that's been a nice boost for boxing in 2010. He's organized a bantamweight tournament that also promises to stir excitement. Moreover, he's been behind THE RING*'s Fight of the Year three of the last five years.*

An admittedly super-competitive guy, Hershman recently signed IBF super middleweight titlist Lucian Bute to a three-fight deal, with the expressed intention of pairing the Canadian superstar with the winner of the Super Six.

It's been that kind of foresight that has made Hershman and Showtime a powerful force on today's boxing landscape. Hershman is a genuine advocate of the sport, proving that boxing can be a hugely entertaining and salable commodity. He's also been a major factor in making Showtime a viable competitor with rival subscription-cable network, HBO.

Not bad for the youngest of four, who was raised on Long Island and took over Showtime sports in October 2003, following in the footsteps of the esteemed Jay Larkin, who passed away in August 2010.

When THE RING *Managing Editor Joseph Santoliquito spoke with Hershman, he was just getting back from the November 6 fight between Juan Manual Lopez and Rafael Marquez in Las Vegas. But despite an extremely busy schedule, Hershman was generous with his time and spoke openly about a myriad of topics. Santoliquito reports:*

"One of the first things you notice about Ken is that he's extremely approachable. You get the sense that he cares deeply about boxing and that he wants to help grow the sport. The other sense you get, thanks to Ken's dry sense of humor, is that if he wasn't a corporate exec sitting behind a desk in a high-rise office building in Manhattan, he could just as easily be a shot-and-a-beer guy you can hang out with, talking about old fights."

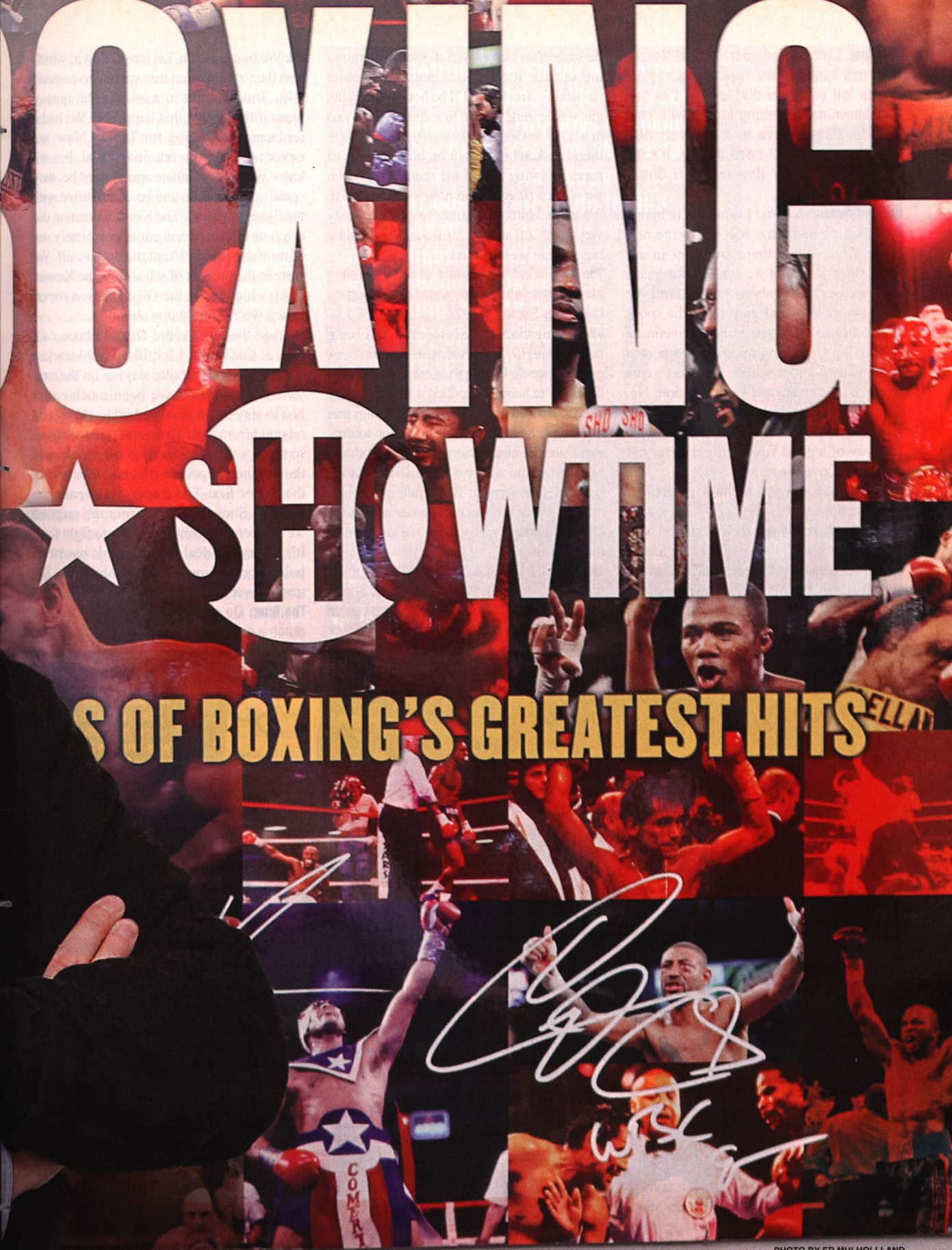


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLLAND

The Ring: Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy, has been quoted recently as saying: "I can tell you from discussions I've had that Showtime is getting fed up with boxing too. People have to remember; HBO and Showtime don't need boxing. It's the other way around." How fed up is Showtime with boxing?

Ken Hershman: *(laughs)* I think we're happy with boxing and what it does for the network. Believe me, there are times in our day-to-day jobs that we scratch our heads and ask ourselves about boxing and the decision-making that goes on in the sport. It's enough to make you wonder sometimes, but boxing is still an important component of Showtime and it will be for many years to come. But to answer your question: No, I'm not fed up with it. I can be fed up with a particular person or situation that gets in the way of a good fight *(laughs)*. But not boxing—I love the sport.

The Ring: How did you manage or orchestrate the Super Six?

KH: It wasn't solely my idea. It started with discussions I was having with Kalle Sauerland from Sauerland Events, which promotes Arthur Abraham. We were talking about the possibilities of the super middleweights and we both came to the conclusion that we could do something bigger with it. We began thinking outside the box and putting together something structured. I'll be honest with you, this whole thing started in a conference room in a hotel in Germany *(laughs)*, and we were literally sketching it out on blank pieces of paper, drawing out all the scenarios of who we wanted *(laughs)* and how we would do it. It's turned into something we're obviously very proud of, and it's turned into something bigger than we expected.

The Ring: What were some of the stumbling blocks that you had to overcome in putting the Super Six together?

KH: Getting the Super Six together, this being boxing *(laughs)*, it does remain true you can't get two guys in boxing to agree that the sky is blue. We're happy we pulled it off and happy to keep it together despite all of the things that have happened. This is an elimination tournament, and the elimination process is working. Maybe not the way we originally intended *(laughs)*, with Jermain Taylor falling out early and the injuries to Mikkel Kessler and Andre Dirrell forcing them out, but we're down to the top four guys.

The Ring: It's not Showtime's fault that fighters have fallen out, but it has placed Showtime in a spot. Talk about the juggling you've had to do with Kessler and Dirrell's injuries?

KH: We had Jermain Taylor go down, which was the first situation that we had to contend with. But we built in a lot of contingency plans if things like that happened. We had a replacement waiting for Taylor. Now, we never targeted any one individual, but we knew who was out there and, if need be, they could come right in and be competitive with the fighters we had. The Kessler situation did catch us off guard and came completely out of nowhere. Mikkel kept that to himself. We were in the process of scheduling the Kessler fight, which led to the Glen Johnson move, which we're very happy about.

And then the Andre Dirrell phone call, and, at that point, I felt like I got knocked down myself. I felt like staying on the canvas, and it would have been much easier just to stay down. But we had to get up and rebound from that. There was so much time, so much energy, so many good people, and the number of people that had invested in the Super Six. The Super Six means too much to Showtime, and, from the reaction we've seen, it means too much to fight fans. It's a very big deal to us that this reaches a point where someone holds that Super Six trophy over their head.

The Ring: Do you think the Super Six will reach a conclusion?

PHOTO BY MATTHIAS KERN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

COUNTED OUT
Hershman was on his way to the airport when Jermain Taylor was brutally knocked out by Arthur Abraham in the first stage of Showtime's "Super Six," so he didn't see what happened live. But Hershman agrees that Taylor did the right thing by pulling out of the tournament.

KH: Well, like I said, we invested a great deal into this. It better come to a conclusion *(laughs)*. But seriously, we've always concerned ourselves, when it comes to fighting and boxing, to see it through. When you consider the difficulty of fights, with no walkovers in this competition and all the time invested and the commitment of everyone, not just Showtime, but the promoters, and most of all the fighters, you have to see it through—and we will. Of course, there were concerns that it could all be for naught. But we're also talking about amazing competitors, and we had to stick by them. There was not so much doubt when Kessler went out, but, when Dirrell fell out, I had some doubts whether or not it made sense to continue. Sure, those things go through your mind, when you consider everything that happened and you're left with three of the original six. But we decided to plow ahead. We're going to make it happen. There will be a conclusion to this—and it will be a big event.

The Ring: If you had the Super Six to do over again, what would you differently?

KH: There are a couple of technical little things in the contracts and how they were structured that I would do differently. The Super Six was pretty well thought through. They thought through all the permutations of contracts, how things could play out, everything. But aside from little technical things that happened, I liked how the revenue sharing worked and the venue process. No, looking back over it, at the whole context of things, there's only a fair amount of small things that I would do over if I could.

The Ring: How scared were you when Arthur Abraham knocked out Jermain Taylor?

KH: I didn't even see it, so I didn't know the extent of what happened to Jermain. I was on my way to the airport from that fight, to the Carl Froch-Dirrell fight. In retrospect, it was a pretty vicious knockout. We were obviously concerned first and foremost for Jermain. He's a nice young man with a family. I don't ever want to put myself in a position to place my decision before the health of a fighter. I can't say that I'm unhappy that he dropped out. I'm pleased that he did. I thought it was the right decision. It left us in a little bit of a bind, I'll admit, and we had to think of guys we knew were out there to replace him. But it is something we anticipated. We simply had to find someone and get him in.

The Ring: Who were tougher to deal with while making the Super Six, the fighters or the promoters?

KH: *(laughs)* Oh, that's great. That's good. You doubt that I would think it's funny because it has varied throughout the tournament, changing from promoter to promoter and most of it centered on the promoter who lost. It was always interesting that the promoter and fighter that lost suddenly went from someone very easy to deal with, someone who you can have a civilized conversation with *(laughs)*, to someone who turned difficult almost overnight, some cases within minutes *(laughs)*. A lot of that centered on the home-field advantage some thought other fighters were getting. They thought it had something to do with the final results. I didn't think it played into the final outcome of fights much at all.

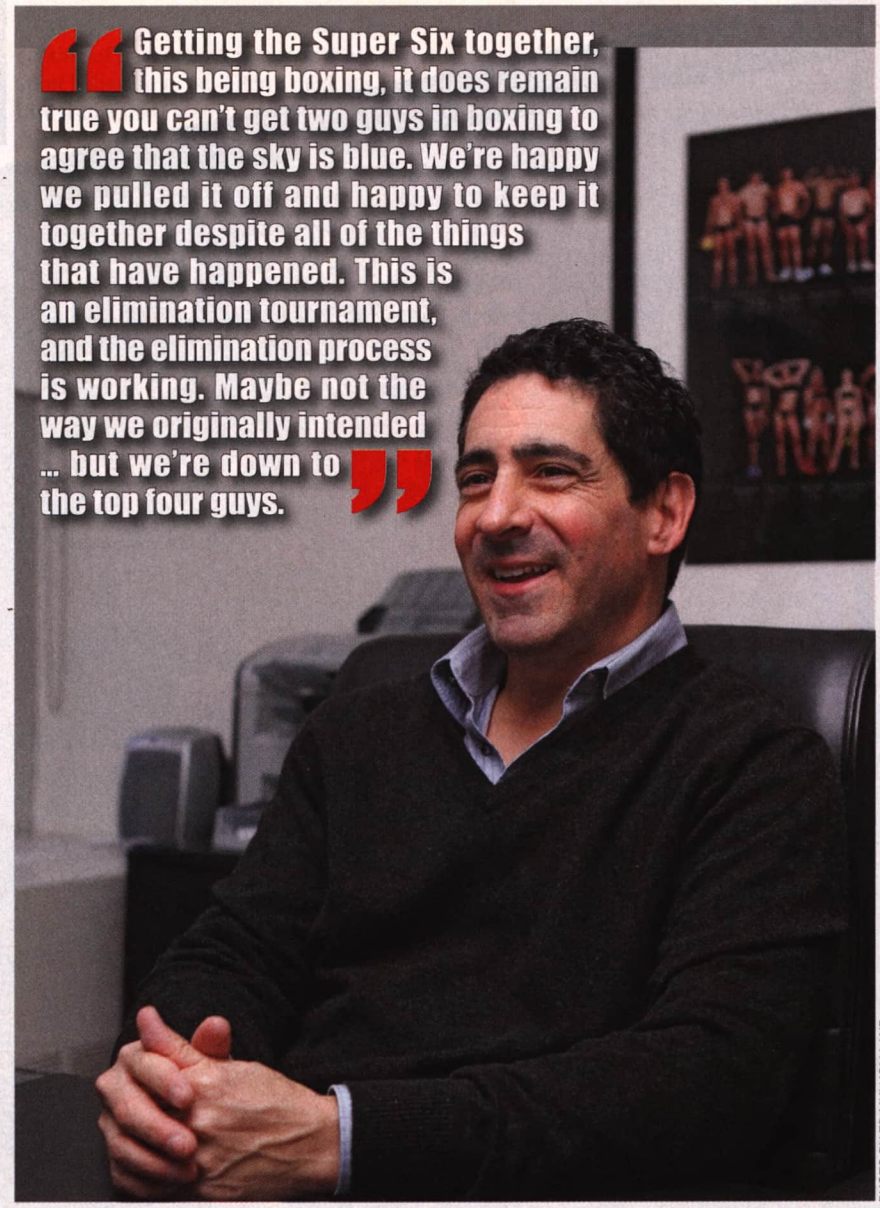


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

The Ring: Showtime has just signed Lucian Bute. What are your plans for him?

KH: Right now, a lot. There was a lot of dust up about the Super Six because we didn't have Lucian in there originally. Actually, he was. We had Lucian and Allan Green in our first draft of eight fighters. But we couldn't have eight—so we had to eliminate two fighters and Lucian and Allan were the two. There was no disrespect aimed at either of them at the time. It's just the way things worked out. You had contract and promotional obligations that had to be factored in, along with the fighters' availability. Now with Bute signed with Showtime, he'll be the next challenge for whoever wins the Super Six. But I need to stress this, there aren't any losers in the Super Six. These guys, their managers, and promoters, they all went out of their way to make this happen, especially the fighters. They all put themselves out there at great risk, and that's something not many world-class fighters are willing to do today. It's why, to me, they're all winners.

And Lucian fits perfectly into the Super Six conclusion. He's placed right into a fabu-

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Despite the problems caused by three of the original six withdrawing from the tournament, Showtime is determined to stick with it. "It's a very big deal to us that this reaches a point where someone holds that Super Six trophy over their head," said Hershman

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLLAND

lous scenario. We'll find great fights for him and wait for the winner of the Super Six. I can see the Super Six winner with Lucian—and it will be the greatest super middleweight fight of all time. It doesn't get any simpler than that.

The Ring: What do think of boxing's popularity in Quebec as opposed to other Canadian provinces?

KH: Lucian is based in Montreal, and he sells out in Montreal. He'll easily do 20,000 in the Bell Center. I know Jean Pascal has a great fanbase in Quebec City. I don't know about all of Canada, but we're talking about two big markets there for boxing. The bigness of the arena and an energetic, passionate fanbase helps the television show. It gives it a big-fight feel. Just imagine if Bute and Pascal were to fight, it would be great. It would be the biggest fight in Canadian boxing history.

The Ring: What lessons can American fighters learn from the way Bute has built a constituency in Montreal?

KH: The obvious lesson is that the bigger your fanbase, the bigger your fights. It's difficult to do that in the US than any of these other territories. You have to do it through a lot of different means than just anointing yourself and assuming that people are going to show up.

The Ring: Boxing is in a better place in Germany and Europe. Do you think there's a different attitude about boxing and fighters there than in the US?

KH: I think fighters are fighters. It doesn't matter where you are in the world. They tend to think and act the same. I don't think it's that great a difference. The big difference comes with the markets being much more manageable there than in the US. I still think there is an ability to break through in the US, but it's a bit easier when you're fighting on that championship level boxing on broadcast TV. Whereas here, you have Showtime, HBO, ESPN. Cable TV is where boxing exists now. I know there are more subscribers out there, but that still has a smaller reach and smaller audiences than what broadcast TV offers to the fighters there than here.

It doesn't mean you can't become a breakout star in the US. You just have to work harder at it, and, let's be honest, there are a lot of fighters that don't and a lot of the promoters don't know how nor want to put an investment into it. It's one of those hurdles we face in the US. Everyone is out for themselves. That attitude has hurt the sport. People in boxing need to work with each other, and that may never happen. They're all after the same pie. I always liken it to trying to grab all of the silverware on the Titanic—it won't do you any good when the ship is sinking and you're at the bottom of the ocean.

But I would like to address this: The perception of boxing isn't as bad as those in the sport believe it to be. I don't think it's in the dire shape that boxing people say it is. Our fans and subscribers still dial in and like to watch boxing. We wouldn't be in the boxing business if we were losing money *(laughs)*. Fans still want to see fights on premium networks. The quality of fighters couldn't be any better than they are today. What it's lacking is the breakout heavyweight star, which we haven't had since Mike Tyson. What you see from the mainstream sports fans and the media is a lot of knee-jerk reaction to that.

The Ring: So is there a chance we will see the Klitschko brothers on Showtime sometime soon?

KH: Why? The Klitschkos have a good thing going in Europe. They fight in Europe, and they get 14 million viewers over there. Their brands are strong there. They're huge. Why come here for something smaller? We dabbled and toyed with the idea of having the Klitschkos on our air, and I'm not opposed to that. I just don't see that market for the Klitschkos or the heavyweight class today. Do you? Does any boxing fan? It's a pretty mediocre crop right now. I would love to have an American heavyweight come along like Tyson because it's great for the sport and everyone involved in the sport. But there is no one in the heavyweight division that can come even close to beating the Klitschkos. Maybe David Haye, but he seems unwilling to fight either of them. So who is out there? We're always seeing the same type of fight from the Klitschkos, where they dominate round after round.

The Ring: What type of fighters do you like to watch?

KH: I love fighters that are action fighters who are willing to engage, and that doesn't mean you just stand there and get hit until you go down. I always loved fighters like Diego Corrales, Vic Darchinyan, Juan Manuel Lopez, Rafael Marquez, and Israel Vazquez. I can't leave out my Super Six friends. They're all tremendous, fantastic fighters. Carl Froch is exciting, and Arthur Abraham is the kind of fighter who is always one punch away from ending a fight. And then you have Andre Ward, who has shown a smart tactical fighter can win and bring in a large audience. The key is matching fighters stylistically and personality-wise that will promote and elevate the sport.

The Ring: Were you surprised by Glen Johnson's knockout of Allan Green?

KH: It's hard not to love Glen. He's a tremendous human being and a tremendous competitor. I wasn't surprised at all by what he did to Allan Green. He got an opportunity, and he capitalized on it. I'm proud, very proud, that he's part of the Super Six. He can be a major player in this. One more fight and big win, and he's in the finals. That's what makes the Super Six so exciting. You just never know.

The Ring: From whom did you learn the most about boxing?

KH: I learned about the players, the people, the fights, and the fighters first and foremost from Jay Larkin. He's probably been the most influential on me. I learned from watching fights, taking in the great history of boxing by watching MSG and ESPN Classics, and watching some of the real old stuff. You try to play to your strengths and what you know, think, and believe you've gained from others. Jay was famous for saying to me when things were really difficult and nothing seemed to be going right, "It's just boxing on television" *(laughs)*. It's a tremendous thing that's simple, and it represented Jay and his ability to distill things down to that. He's been that little voice on my shoulder that constantly reminds me that it's a rough-and-tumble business. You need to keep that philosophy in mind at times. Jay's was an effective style. He had that bigger-than-life personality.

The Ring: A classic Jay story: Backstage at the Andrew Golota-Tyson fight in Detroit, when Golota quit and then ran back to his locker room, leaving the Showtime broadcast crew hanging, Jay came steaming by. You could hear Jay's booming voice through Golota's locker room door, making the walls vibrate. He was blasting Golota and telling him to get back out there or else he'd never be on Showtime again. Can you see yourself ever doing that?

KH: *(Laughs)* That's a great story, and I can just imagine Jay doing that *(laughs)*. He had a larger-than-life personality, and he wasn't afraid to speak his mind, even if it was to a world-class heavyweight. Jay was great that way. Let's just say that I get my points across in a little lower voice *(laughs)*. I get them across, believe me. I just do it a little differently than Jay did. It's just a matter of style. When I need to drive home a point, I'm not as bombastic about it, but I can make people understand the ramifications of things if I need to.

The Ring: Showtime is in the unique position of televising Strikeforce, an MMA company, as well as boxing. Is there competition between MMA and boxing? Are they competing for the same audience or different audiences?

KH: I don't think there's competition, and I think the audiences will and should overlap. Bits and pieces of boxing audiences may like MMA, and the same goes for MMA

fans with boxing. I really believe that they are very different sports. I can't see why you can't enjoy both and appreciate the skill and talent in both sports. What I have noticed is that older boxing fans are more resistant to accept MMA. I know there are some MMA fans that are more resistant to boxing, and we need to show them how great the sport can be. We can grow that audience. Frankly, it's a large part of why we do tournaments like the Super Six and the bantamweights. Once MMA fans or just general sports fans see the quality of what we do and the quality of our fights, we're convinced we'll keep them as fans.

The Ring: What is your general philosophy in making fights?

KH: We like to keep it simple. I think that we have to be convinced that the fight is first and foremost competitive, great for TV, and that the price is right. It does sound simple, but that's our formula. We think if we can stick to that strategy fight-in and fight-out, we'll put the best fights on TV, and we think we have.

The Ring: You guys seemed to have fallen in love with tournaments. Why bantamweights this time?

KH: We loved the depth of talent at that weight class and the personalities and styles. You can mix and match them any way you want. These are fights you want to see and fights that the fans would love. Abner Mares is a great young fighter with a huge future ahead of him in the sport. Vic Darchinyan is one of the most fun and dynamic personalities in boxing. Yonnhy Perez is a warrior who's never in a bad fight, and Joseph Agbeko is a tough, rugged fighter who's a sweet kid and beat Darchinyan. This has the makings of some great matchups. I don't know who's going to win it, but we do like the tournament format.

The Ring: Will we be seeing more tournaments on Showtime in the future?

KH: Definitely. Fans like it. Tournaments overlay something on top of what we have here as a niche sport. It broadens the interest for sports fans to tune in, and that's what we're trying to do.

The other thing is that the bantamweights follow the Super Six, and it keeps the conversation going between the fights. This way, there is a steady stream of information and stories—we keep boxing out there. I think there's been more written about the Super Six this year, even more than anything written or covered, except Manny Pacquiao.

The Ring: Is there any truth to the rumor the bantamweight tournament will be now held in the US as opposed to Mexico?

KH: Now, as we're talking, that looks like a fact. It won't be held in Mexico. It will be held in the US, but I don't know where it will be held yet. We just weren't comfortable with the structure of going to Mexico and how that was presented to us. The challenge there was something we couldn't surmount. I'll guarantee you this: It will be held somewhere on December 11th *(laughs)*.

The Ring: Did Showtime ever conduct any talks with HBO about conflicting dates, like Showtime's Juan Manuel Lopez-Rafael Marquez show and HBO's Zab Judah-Lucas Matthysse fight on November 6?

KH: We're not allowed to have those conversations because they would be improper and illegal, but, with that being said, I agree that it's bad for the sport to have two shows appearing on the same date. It affects the sport, and it affects both networks. We honestly try to avoid those conflicts the best we can—and I would like to think HBO would do the same. But because of fights falling out and injuries, there are just so many dates to put on fights. I don't think there was any plan that it worked out that way, where both shows came on November 6 on top of each other. I hope in 2011 and beyond that could be avoided.

The Ring: Though there had to be a little smile on your face knowing Showtime had the far superior show than HBO on November 6?

KH: *(Smiles)* We are competitors, and I like to win *(smiles)*. We always want to come out on top. We believe we've been doing it year in and year out. I believe we put on the best boxing on TV—Period. We put on fights that are far more competitive, far more regularly, with charismatic fighters that fans want to see. And we don't make you pay a pay-per-view charge for seeing them.

SMART MOVE

Lucian Bute, Hershman, and InterBox President Jean Bedard all seem very happy about Showtime signing Bute to a three-fight deal. One of those bouts will pit the Canadian superstar against the winner of the Super Six.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

"We are competitors, and I like to win. We always want to come out on top. We believe we've been doing it year in and year out. I believe we put on the best boxing on TV—period."

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

The Ring: Does it give you pride in knowing you're probably doing more at Showtime with a smaller budget than HBO?

KH: There's no question there's a competition there. I never look at the budget as a challenge. We want to be smart, and I think we're great at doing that. To me, it's not so much a budget issue. I think it's good what we do. You deal with what you're given, and you work within those parameters. I think we've been pretty successful with finding the right talent at the right time with the right fights. We're still buying good fights with great fighters. Maybe people are just noticing.

The Ring: Has promoters opting to have their fighters fight within their own stables hurt Showtime in any way?

KH: Whatever it is that impedes the making of a great fight, it's a problem. I think that ultimately you have to put on the best fights if you plan on selling them to TV. We're not willing to put a guy out there just to win if it's not the best fight. If you have a philosophy like that, you won't get the best fight. We've been fortunate. We haven't experienced that yet here with promoters locking their own fighters into the ring. I do know it's happening more and more, but, if you look at our schedule, there were very few shows in 2010 with just one promoter. Most of what we do have copromotions attached to them. The fewer issues in making great fights the better.

The Ring: Were you raised in a family of sports fans?

KH: We were big football fans. We've been Jets' season ticket holders since 1983. Personally, I played a number of sports growing up as a kid. I grew up the youngest of four, but I was the best athlete *(laughs)*. None of my siblings were athletic *(laughs)*. I was pretty good at soccer, not very good at baseball, and played basketball until everyone grew except me *(laughs)*. I love sports and the competition of it.

My father was a lawyer; my mother was a teacher in a private school, where she taught a number of the kids from the Jets. That's how we got to know a bunch of the Jets. I loved Wesley Walker because where our seats were at Giants Stadium, sitting in the end zone seats, Walker would do this fade route and he would run right at you. I loved the Al Toon era too. I thought he was fantastic. But the Jets were always snake-bitten. As a Jets' fan, you always felt like the Giants got more attention, like they were the bigger story and the bigger team.

The Ring: We don't know much about your background. What was life like for you growing up?

KH: I'm an ultra-competitive guy who grew up on Long Island, went to John F. Kennedy High School, UMass, George Washington, and then Fordham law school. I was a licensed attorney and practicing in a private law firm before I came to Showtime in 1992 as an attorney and then took over the sports department in October 2003. Now here I am in the boxing business *(laughs)*.

The Ring: Does boxing need to be saved?

KH: I don't think boxing needs to be saved. That might shock boxing people. I think we can improve on it, grow it, enhance it, but I don't think being saved comes into the equation. Boxing has been around for a long time. You look at the history and the kinds of fights being put on today, because I think if you look at the quality of fights we've been putting on, it's a fantastically exciting sport. Ask anyone who saw the Lopez-Marquez fight on November 6 what they thought about boxing. It doesn't seem to have to be saved. When it works, boxing is one of the most exciting sports out there.

The Ring: What needs to be done to change the perception of boxing?

KH: I think what mainstream sports fans need to do is go back and check out boxing again. I think they would be surprised, no, *I know they would be surprised* by how exciting the sport is today. I don't have a magic wand that I can wave over my head and it can magically change the sport. There are a lot of things in every sport that fans have issues with. But you don't write off the NFL because one, two, or 10 players go awry. I don't think you write off boxing because one fight had been canceled. If one big fight doesn't happen, it doesn't mean the end of boxing. You have to give boxing a little bit of

a break and look at it with a fresh eye. At the highest level, they'd see that fighters today are at their best, and, with all-year conditioning, it makes them better than any fighter a decade or two decades ago.

The Ring: How and when did you fall in love with boxing?

KH: I was a fan when I was a kid watching those Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier fights and in the 1980s with Sugar Ray Leonard, Tommy Hearns, Marvin Haggler, and Roberto Duran. What an incredible time to be a boxing fan. And I was the one always rooting for the underdog. It's why I always rooted for Joe Frazier, rooting and hoping against hope that Frazier would win. I'll admit I lost track when I went to college and law school, putting a lot of my focus into studying, not flunking out, and girls, and not necessarily in that order *(laughs)*. I was reintroduced to boxing once I got onto Showtime.

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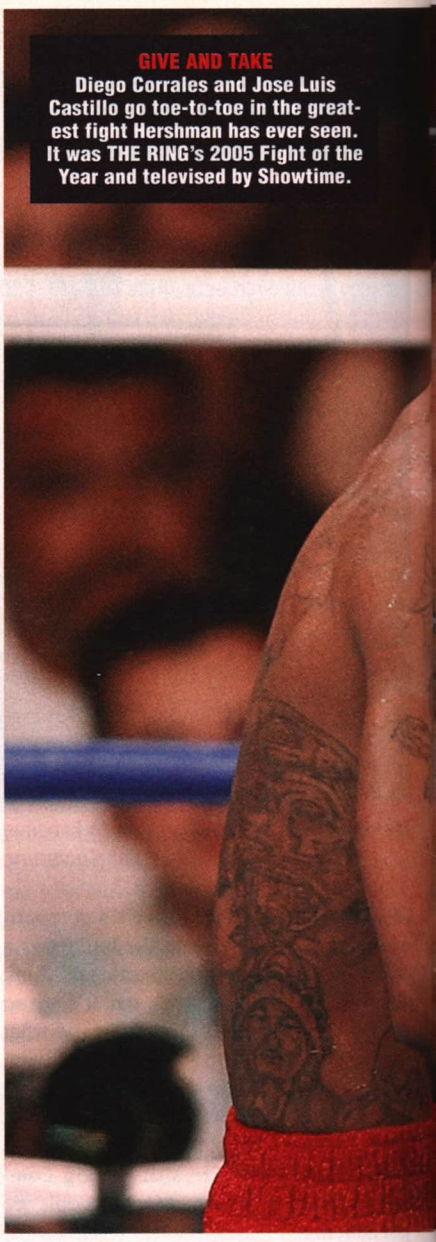

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PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

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a break and look at it with a fresh eye. At the highest level, they'd see that fighters today are at their best, and, with all-year conditioning, it makes them better than any fighter a decade or two decades ago.

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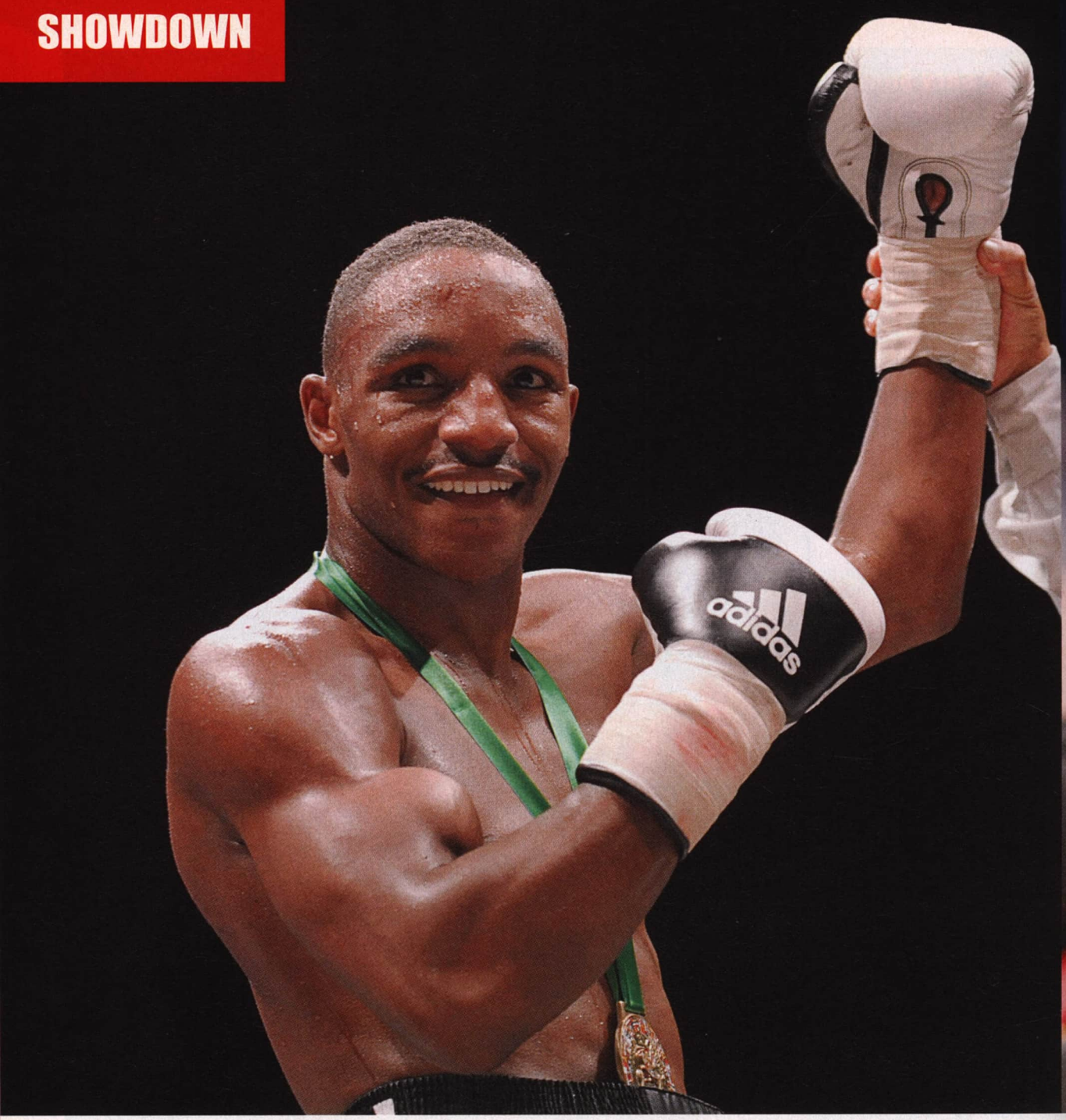
PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

number-one boxing network? But really, we have a great product that we believe in. We don't think we're putting on great fights, *we know it*. That comes from a team of very talented people.

The Ring: Where do you see Showtime boxing going in the future?

KH: We're about to embark on one of the most exciting runs in the network's history. We're going into 2011 with the semifinals and finals for the Super Six. We have Lucian Bute's debut on the network. I think it's one of the most exciting times for Showtime subscribers. And if you're not a subscriber, you better be. We're excited about this time and where we're going. Sure, we've had our ups and downs like anyone in this sport, but I'm pleased that we've been pretty consistent in delivering year in and year out great fights. In three of the last five years, RING magazine awarded Showtime fights as Fights of the Year. That says something. We've been doing this for a long time, and, if it's taken this long for people to recognize it, so be it. We're happy with where we are and happy about where we're going.

And it's not just boxing. We have 38 NASCAR shows, 23 *Inside The NFL* shows, over 40 live events, which includes MMA and boxing. We have a very busy team that works their butts off. We're nonstop here, with a plate that's extremely full, and always exploring new possibilities. It's a great work environment, where people actually enjoy coming to work every day. ■



Devon Alexander Main Event

Junior Welterweight Unification

There's nothing that makes boxing fans happier than a match between a pair of undefeated young stars at the top of their game, and that's exactly what they'll be getting when Devon Alexander and Timothy Bradley clash on HBO, January 29, 2011. Both fighters and their camps should be praised for taking such a huge risk at a time when perfect records often seem to mean more than accomplishment.

The 140-pound division is overflowing with talented fighters, and Bradley and Alexander are at the forefront of the pack. The winner of their match will also be in an excellent position

12 Rounds Timothy Bradley

to fight for THE RING world championship belt, which has been vacant since Manny Pacquiao relinquished the title to fight at a heavier weight.

These are not one-dimensional fighters or face-first sluggers. Both Bradley and Alexander will bring myriad skills into the ring, along with extensive amateur careers, fabulous conditioning, and a burning desire to prevail.

A loss certainly won't mean the end of the road for such young fighters, but a win, especially a decisive one, will boost the victor to a new level of fame—and perhaps a new tax bracket.

DEVON ALEXANDER

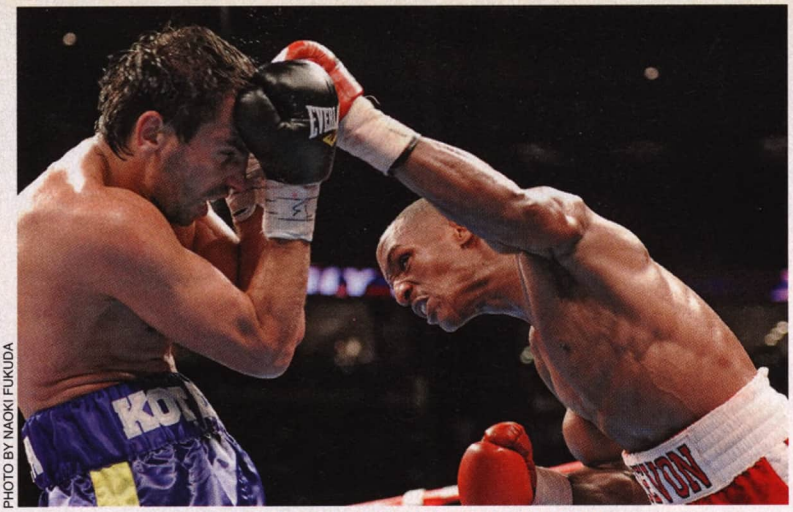


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

DEVON ALEXANDER W 12 ANDREAS KOTELNIK
Alexander has Kotelnik covering up

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

DEVON ALEXANDER KO 8 JUAN URANGO
Alexander wings a right at Urango

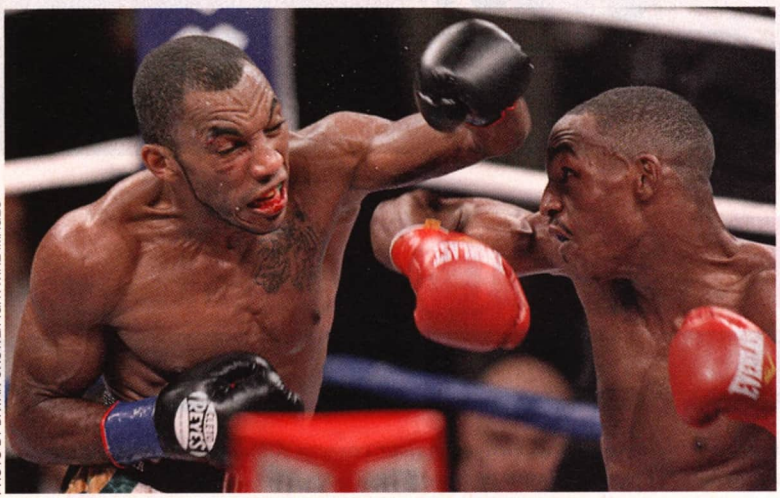


PHOTO BY BRYAN CROWE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

DEVON ALEXANDER KO 8 JUNIOR WITTER
Witter and Alexander mix it up

Record and World Rating

Is 21-0 with 13 knockouts … Joined Kevin Cunningham's gym at the tender age of seven to avoid the perils of the north St. Louis street life … Compiled a 300-40 amateur record, including three PAL national championships, a Junior Golden Gloves, a Junior Olympics championship, and the US junior welterweight national championship in 2004 … Missed making '04 Olympic team after losing a tie-breaker … Made his pro debut in May '04 at the age of 17 … Won two minor alphabet belts in '06 and '07 before capturing the vacant WBC 140-pound title in August '09 … Annexed the IBF junior welter title in March '10 … Ranked number three at junior welterweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Is 23 years old … Stands 5'7" with 71-inch reach … Lean, muscular build … Considerably better than average hand and foot speed … Excellent stamina allows busy work rate … Always in shape to go 12 fast rounds.

Best Weapons

Hand speed, augmented by well-rounded arsenal of blows … Uses southpaw jab to score from range and set up combinations … Sharp counterpuncher … Uppercut rapidly becoming payoff punch.

Previous Fight

Had more difficulty than expected winning a unanimous 12-round decision over veteran Andreas Kotelnik, who won a silver medal at the 2000 Olympics … Although all three judges scored it 116-112 in Alexander's favor, many observers thought it was closer, and some felt that the Ukrainian had won outright … Kotelnik's savvy boxing, tight defense, and lead rights gave Alexander plenty of problems … CompuBox actually had Kotelnik landing more punches (225 to 202), but Alexander's harder, sharper blows proved the difference.

Quality of Opposition

Breezed through his first 13 pro fights, including easy marks such as Ramon Ortiz (KO 3), Justo Almazan (W 6), Carlos Parra (KO 1), and Juan Yoani Cervantes (W 6) … Best results during early part of career came against undefeated Cory Peterson (KO 1) … First significant test came against former junior welter titlist DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corely (W 12) at Madison Square Garden in January 2008 … Beat Junior Witter (KO 8) to claim vacant WBC belt in August '09 … Took IBF belt from Juan Urango (KO 8) in spectacular fashion in March 2010 … Also tallied decent wins over Jesus Rodriguez (KO 9), Miguel Callist (W 12), and Donovan Castaneda (W 6).

TIMOTHY BRADLEY

Record and World Rating

Is 26-0 with 11 knockouts and 1 no-contest ... A troubled youngster who found an outlet for his anger when his father took him to a boxing gym at age 10 ... Had approximately 145 amateur bouts, including a silver medal at the 2003 Golden Gloves championships ... Turned pro in August '04 ... Captured the WBC junior welterweight title in May 2008 ... Made two successful defenses of the WBC strap, winning the WBO belt in the second of those defenses ... Stripped of the WBC trinket ... Has tallied two defenses of WBO title and has also made a successful foray into the welterweight class ... Ranked number 10 at welterweight and number one at junior welterweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Is 27 years old ... Stands 5'6" with a 69-inch reach ... Squat, bodybuilder-type physique but not muscle-bound ... Quick reflexes ... Outstanding hand-eye coordination ... Solid chin ... Promethean work ethic and boundless energy.

Best Weapons

Overhand right to the head scores well and often ... Good counter left hook ... Accurate jab ... Works the body well ... dogged determination ... Watch out for that bald head when he leaps to the attack!

Previous Fight

While waiting for a major junior welter match to materialize, Bradley tested the waters at 147-pounds against undefeated welterweight Luis Carlos Abregu ... Bradley won a unanimous decision by scores of 118-110, 117-111, and 116-112, but it was a demanding fight nevertheless ... He wobbled Abregu a couple of times, but lacked the power to finish the larger man ... The victory proved that Bradley could beat a world-class welter but also indicated that he is better suited to the 140-pound class.

Quality of Opposition

Worked the California club circuit for a number of years ... Gradually worked his way up, getting the better of increasingly tougher competition, such as Alfonso Sanchez (KO 1), Jaime Rangel (Tech. W 8), Nasser Athumani (KO 5), Donald Camarena (W 10), and Miguel Vazquez (W 10) ... This rugged apprenticeship prepared him to take the WBC belt away from Junior Witter (W 12) in May 2008 ... Made two successful defenses of the WBC strap, beating Edner Cherry (W 12) and Kendall Holt (W 12) ... Winning the WBO belt from Holt prompted the WBC to strip him of its bauble ... Defended WBO title against Lamont Peterson (W 12) and then temporarily moved up to fight Abregu.

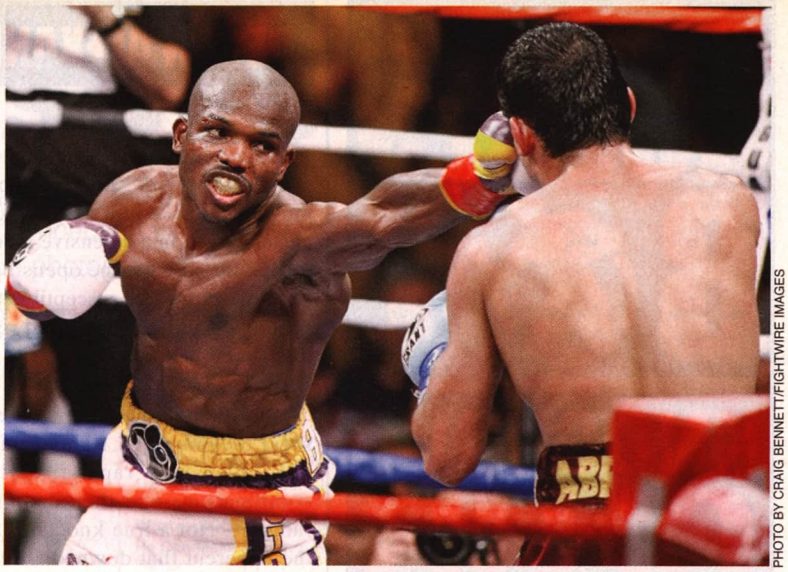


PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

TIMOTHY BRADLEY W 12 JUAN CARLOS ABREGU
Bradley catches Abregu with a flush left

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

TIMOTHY BRADLEY W 12 LAMONT PETERSON
Bradley beats Peterson to the punch with a left

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TIMOTHY BRADLEY KO 8 JAIME RANGEL
Rangel samples Bradley's left hook

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DEVON ALEXANDER

Defense

Sound fundamentals, backed up with speedy footwork and slick upper-body movement make him very difficult to tag cleanly when in a defensive mode … Can be countered when he opens up, and, as Kotelnik proved, is susceptible to that old southpaw bugaboo—the lead right.

Style

Well-schooled boxer-puncher with solid technique … Likes to nip in and out, unleashing rapid-fire clusters of combinations and then dancing out of range … Not a true knockout artist, but the uppercut that downed Urango was a beauty … Fights as well on the inside as he does at range.

The Questions

Did his mediocre outing against Kotelnik hurt his confidence? Will he be able to avoid Bradley's overhand right? Can he withstand Bradley's relentless pressure and body punching? Will his relative inexperience at the top level be a handicap?

TIMOTHY BRADLEY

Defense

Can bob-and-weave and use angles on the inside … Uses his foot speed to motor out of range … Recovers quickly when nailed … Aggressive attitude also keeps opponents wary … Short stature makes for a small target when he fights out of a crouch.

Style

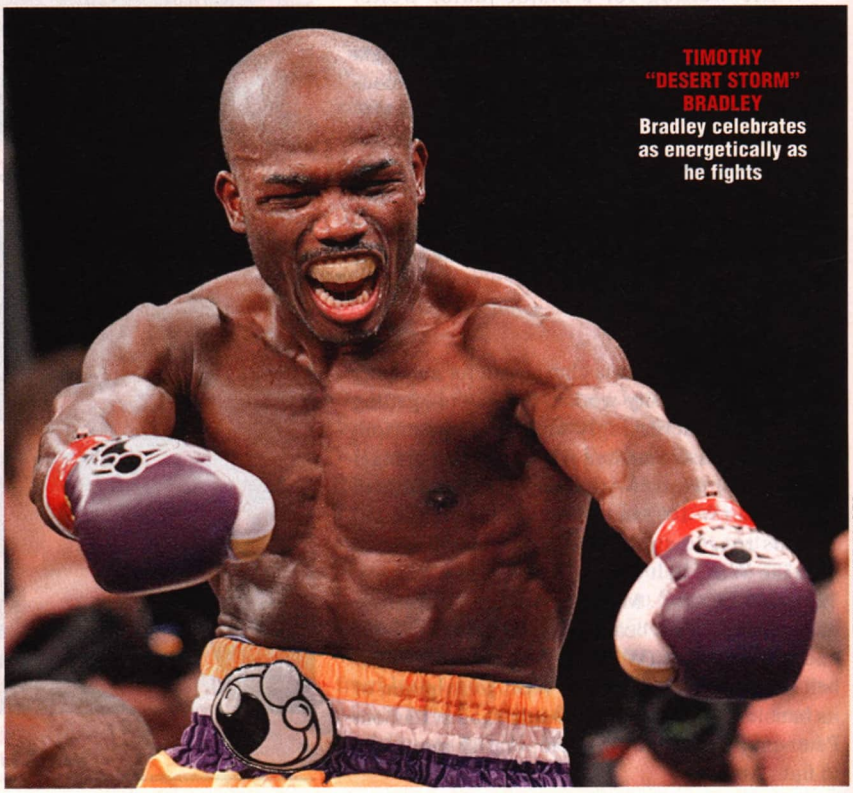
Energetic dynamo … Always ready to attack … Exceptional timing allows him to beat taller, longer-armed fighters to the punch … Willing to take risks and trade … Hand speed big advantage during exchanges … Makes for entertaining fights despite modest punching power.

The Questions

Can he deal with Alexander's speed and movement? What happens if he gets drilled by one of Alexander's murderous uppercuts? Will he be able to offset Alexander's height and reach advantage? Does he have the power to score a come-from-behind kayo if need be.

THE OUTCOME

A skillful chess match eventually turns into a fan-friendly shootout, with Bradley's resolve and greater strength carrying him to a close but decisive decision victory.



TIMOTHY "DESERT STORM" BRADLEY
Bradley celebrates as energetically as he fights

PHOTO BY BRYAN CROWE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

BACK ISSUES OF KO

Back issues of several editions of *KO Magazine*, the acknowledged leader in boxing journalism, are still available in limited quantity. Since its inception in 1980, *KO* has become known for its quality stories and columns and peak-action photographs. Don't delay. Supplies are running out!

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Sept. 1999: Mayweather vs. Mosley: Who's The Future Of Boxing? Color Pinup: James Page. Interview: J Russell Peltz. Also: Evander Holyfield, Thomas Hearns, Angel Manfredy.

Oct. 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): The KO 100. Color Pinup: Felix Trinidad. Interview: Jake LaMotta. Also: Tony Ayala, Erik Morales, Junior Jones.

Nov. 1999: De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: "It's Gonna Come Down To Who The Hell Wants It Most!" Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Arturo Gatti. Also: Roy Jones, Sugar Shane Mosley, Vassily Jirov.

Dec. 1999: David Reid & Fernando Vargas: Olympic Teammates On A Collision Course! Color Pinup: Zab Judah. Interview: Ike Ibeabuchi. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Antonio Tarver, Mike Tyson.

Holiday 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Lewis-Holyfield II: Why We Demand A Knockout! Color Pinup: Sharmba Mitchell. Interview: Paulie Ayala. Also: James Toney, James Page & Terronn Millett, decade review.

Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Also: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Also: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win ... And Why. Color Pinup: Vitali Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Also: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns." Color Pinup: Steve Johnston. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

Nov. 2000: Sugar Rush! Mosley Achieves Superstardom At Oscar's Expense. Color Pinup: Lennox Lewis. Interview: Jay Larkin. Also: David Tua, Oleg Maskaev, Ben Tackie.

Dec. 2000: Mike Tyson vs. Lennox Lewis: 15 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Shane Mosley. Interview: Frank Maloney. Also: Oscar De La Hoya, Bronco McKart, our heroes' heroes.

[FULL-COLOR BEGINNING FEBRUARY 2001]

Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua ... But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

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Dec. 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox? Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

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Winter 2003: KO Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

Feb. 2004: Shane Mosley: A Second Chance At Superstardom. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Laila Ali, Scott LeDoux, retirement.

April 2004: Human After All: Tarver Makes Jones Turn To Tyson. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Sharmba Mitchell, Toney-McCline preview, trash-talking.

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Oct. 2004: Dr. Klitschko: The Perfect Band-Aid For The Heavyweight Division. Interview: Diego Corrales. Also: Monte Barrett, Cory Spinks, Vinny Paz & Sven Ottke.

Feb. 2005: Exclusive KO Interview—Manny Pacquiao. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Manning Galloway, quitting, perfect heavyweight.

Oct. 2005: El Feroz With A Twist: Re-tooled Vargas Gets Defensive. Interview: Zab Judah. Also: Marco Antonio Barrera, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., KO at 25.

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WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

Heavyweights

David Haye KO 3 Audley Harrison
(Retains WBA Title)
Kevin Johnson KO 4 Charles Davis
Tony Thompson KO 4 Paul Marinaccio
George Arias W Disq. 10 Emilio Zarate
Newfel Ouatah W 10 Cyril Leonet
Chauncy Welliver KO 3 Brad Gregory
Matamba Debatch Postolo KO 7 Thomas Moutuari
Fabio Moli KO 5 Lisandro Diaz
Chazz Witherspoon KO 4 Alexis Mejias
Tye Fields KO 3 Ken Frank

Cruiserweights

Danny Green W 12 BJ Flores
Troy Ross W 10 Carl Handy
Giacobbe Fragomeni KO 6 Eduardo Ayala
Pawel Kolodziej KO 3 John McClain
Shane Cameron W 12 Anthony McCracken
Elvir Muriqi W 10 Daniel Judah
Mateusz Masternak W 12 Ismail Abdoul
Enad Licina W 12 Felix Cora
Thabiso Mchunu W 12 Daniel Bruwer
Victor Palacios KO 11 Jose Ventura
Brian Minto KO 2 Pierre Karam

Light Heavyweights

Zsolt Erdei W 8 Samson Onyango
Denis Simcic W 10 Jindrich Velecky
Francesco Versaci W 10 Fatjon Murati
Marcus Johnson KO 3 Kevin Engel

Super Middleweights

Glen Johnson KO 8 Allan Green
Robert Stieglitz W12 Enrique Ornelas
Edwin Rodriguez KO 9 James McGirt Jr.
Farah Ennis KO 7 Victor Lares
William Joppy D 10 Cory Cummings
Lennox Allen KO 7 Nick Brinson
George Groves KO 6 Kenny Anderson
Alexander Brand KO 6 Manuel Banquez
Aaron Pryor Jr. W 8 Dyah Davis

Junior Middleweights

Manny Pacquiao W 12 Antonio Margarito
(Wins Vacant WBC Title)
Oleksandr Spyrko W 10 Abdulaziz Matazimov
Adriano Nicchi W 10 Francesco Di Fiore
Marcos Vergara KO 10 Carlos Araya
Ossie Duran W 10 Matt Vanda
Carlos Baldomir W 10 Amilcar Melian
Brian Rose W 10 Lee Noble
Aki Selesmaa W 10 Mika Joensuu
Jimmy Lange KO 10 Joe Wyatt
Ishe Smith KO 2 Alexander Quiroz

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sergio Martinez KO 2 Paul Williams
(Retains World/WBC Title)
Sebastian Sylvester W 12 Mahir Oral
(Retains IBF Title)
Daniel Geale KO 12 Roman Karmazin
Nick Blackwell W 10 Harry Matthews
Matteo Signani W 10 Giovanni De Carolis
Peter Manfredo Jr. KO 6 Jhon Berrio
Rafael Pintos W 10 Ruben Diaz
David Lemieux KO 1 Hector Camacho Jr.
Hassan N'Dam N'Jikam W 12 Avtandil Khurtsidze
Benjamin Simon KO 6 Zoltan Kalocsai
Fernando Guerrero KO 4 Saul Duran
Sueng Kue Park KO 2 Nilvan Paulo Da Silva
Andy Kolle KO 1 Francisco Osorio

Welterweights

Diego Gabriel Chaves KO 1 Jose Mosquera
Steve Maxwell W 12 Alex Ahtong
Mike Jones W 10 Jesus Soto Karass
Jackson Osei Bonsu KO 3 Andre Nascimento
Ilunga Dominique W 10 Ali Kulibali
Antonin Decarie W 10 Irving Garcia
Dennis Laurente W 8 Rashad Holloway
Steve Upsher Chambers W 8 Bayan Jargal
Jose Cotto KO 4 Christopher Henry
Sadam Ali KO 2 Gary Bergeron

Junior Welterweights

Brandon Rios KO 5 Omri Lowther
Zab Judah W 12 Lucas Matthysse
Paul Spadafora KO 5 Alain Hernandez
Serhiy Fedchenko W 12 DeMarcus Corley
Josh King W 10 Rey Anton Olarte
Viktor Postol KO 4 Jahongir Abdullayev
Vernon Paris KO 4 Ramon Guevara
Steven Wills KO 2 Sanatanong Paiwan

Lightweights

Robert Guerrero W 10 Vicente Escobedo
Gavin Rees KO 11 John Watson
Carlos Wiston Velasquez W 10 Moises Solis
Andy Murray W 10 Claudinei Lacerda
Ryo Nakajima KO 7 Pablo Castillo Inami
Azad Azizov KO 6 Kakhaber Avetisian
Juan Witt KO 4 Ramon Lopez
Marcelino Lopez KO 3 Jailer Berrio
Daniel Attah KO 2 Marvin Quintero
Matias Gomez KO 2 Cristobao Borges
Omar Figueroa D 8 Arturo Quintero
Petchbodin Sithmorseng KO 2 Muhamad Des Afrizal
Adrien Broner KO 1 Ilido Julio

SMACKDOWN
Middleweight Fernando Guerrero stuns Saul Duran with a punishing left

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Junior Lightweights

Miguel Roman KO 1 Joan De Guia
Vicente Rodriguez W 10 Miguel Caceres
Domingo Vilpan W 10 Jose Palma
Ricky Sismundo W 10 Rufino Mante
Marcel Meyerdiercks W 10 Philippe Frenois
Balweg Bangoyan KO 7 Eric Macas
Ayanda Yaphi KO 6 Sizwe Yolo
Evgeny Gradovich KO 5 Cordaro Simpkins
Leonardo Zappavigna KO 1 Ji Hoon Kim
Darley Perez KO 1 Ernesto Batioja

Featherweights

Juan Manuel Lopez KO 8 Rafael Marquez
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 2 Santos Marimon
Alberto Garza W 12 Justin Savi
Satoshi Hosono W 10 Koji Umetsu
Daulis Prescott W 10 Jose Carmona
Alberto Servidei W 10 Davide Dieli
Tyson Cave KO 7 Darby Smart
Robert Marroquin KO 1 Francisco Dominguez

Junior Featherweights

Kohei Oba W 10 Futa Nakagishi
Guillermo Rigondeaux W 12 Ricardo Cordoba
Sergio Estrela W 12 Ramon Torres
Jesus Ruiz W 12 Julio David Roque Ler
Giovanni Caro W 10 Felix Machado
Genesis Servania W 10 Alvin Maquiling
Dianever Orcales KO 3 Sonny Manakane
Kazuyoshi Niki KO 2 Ronnachai Por Thitima
Ali Hallab D 10 Amor Belahdj Ali

Bantamweights

Malcolm Tunacao KO 5 Hidenobu Honda
Vusi Malinga W 12 Michael Domingo
Stephane Jamoye KO 11 Giovanni Jaramillo
Nouldy Manakane KO 11 Mark Quon
Stuart Hall KO 7 Gary Davies

Junior Bantamweights

Raul Martinez W 12 Rodrigo Guerrero
Victor Zaleta W 12 Lowie Bantigue
Unathi Gqokoma KO 10 Themba Joyi
John Apolinario D 10 Armando Casa
Robert Udtuhan W 10 Rex Olisa
William Urina KO 7 Genilson Jesus Dos Santos
Kenji Oba KO 5 Witcharapol Kiatprapat
Freddie Martinez KO 3 Hermie Benito
Oscar Ibarra KO 2 Sonny Boy Jaro

Flyweights

Edgar Sosa W 12 Masafumi Okubo
Hassan Azaouagh W 10 Alain Bonnel
Brian Viloria KO 7 Liempetch Sor Veerapol
Rodel Mayol KO 7 Pompetch Twins Gym
Tetsuya Hisada KO 7 Ryo Suzuki
Oscar Blanquet KO 2 Carlos Rodriguez

Junior Flyweights

Gilberto Keb Baas W 12 Omar Nino
(Wins WBC Title)
Denver Cuello KO 1 Kongkrai Kiatpracha
Jesus Geles W 12 Omar Soto
Ivan Meneses KO 6 Lorenzo Trejo
Adrian Mendoza KO 6 Raul Medina
Jose Alfredo Zuniga KO 3 Osvaldo Razon

Strawweights

Kwanthai Sithmorseng W 12 Pigmy Kokietgym
(Wins Vacant WBA Title)
Raul Garcia W 12 Luis De La Rosa
Paipharob Kokietgym KO 1 Domi Nenokeba

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Compiled by Don Stewart

CUBAN CUTIE Rigondeaux beats Cordoba in boring bout

Guillermo Rigondeaux W 12 Ricardo Cordoba

To hear all the talk and hype prior to the fight, you'd almost swear Rigondeaux was a 50-fight veteran with 40 stoppages to his credit. But the Cuban expatriate had just six pro fights—and two Olympic gold medals—entering what was deemed an "interim" alphabet title fight.

Signing with Top Rank has its privileges.

As for Cordoba, he seemed almost an afterthought, despite more than 40 professional fights. The young veteran was bringing a three-fight winning streak with him. That didn't stop Rigondeaux from being considered the favorite.

As often happens, the fanfare and hype didn't exactly equal the product a packed Cowboys Stadium witnessed on the undercard of the Pacquiao-Margarito show.

Rigondeaux won the WBA's "interim" junior featherweight trinket, but he didn't win many fans. The southpaw knocked down Cordoba with a bodyshot in the fourth round but was knocked down himself with what appeared to be a jab in the sixth round.

Rigondeaux was a defensive but accurate puncher who picked his spots to come forward. Southpaw Cordoba, meanwhile, generated some offense, but seemed frustrated. He'd taste a few Rigondeaux punches, and, before he could retaliate, the Cuban was out of range.

The exception was the sixth round, when Cordoba was able to connect. It was a grazing right with little on it, but it was still enough to cause Rigondeaux to try and find his balance by touching his glove to the canvas.

"I trained very hard for this fight. I was prepared for 12 rounds," Rigondeaux said afterward. "It was my first title fight, and I was ready. I gave him a boxing lesson. I thought I won every round. It was an easy fight. On the knockdown, I slipped."

There was no question who won, even if it wasn't the most asthetically pleasing 12 rounds to watch. THE RING scored it 114-112 for Rigondeaux, as did Dr. Ruben Garcia (USA), but Nelson Vazquez (USA) had it a

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Featherweight
Location: Arlington, TX
Date: November 13, 2010
Television: HBO Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Top Rank
Referee: Jon Schorle (USA)

Guillermo Rigondeaux
Age: 30 • **Weight:** 121½
Residence: Miami, FL
Birthplace: Santiago de Cuba, Cuba
Record: 7-0 (5)
Ring Ranking: 5

Ricardo Cordoba
Age: 27 • Weight: 121
Residence: San Miguelito, Panama
Birthplace: Santa Marta, Panama
Record: 37-3-2 (23)
Ring Ranking: 6

wider 117-109 for Rigondeaux. Raul Caiz Sr. (USA) might have been looking at a different fight, scoring it 114-112 for Cordoba.

Despite the split verdict, the victory was enough to continue the Rigondeaux hype machine chugging forward.

Brandon Rios KO 5 Omri Lowther

As a replacement for Kelly Pavlik on the Pacquiao-Margarito undercard, this was Rios' chance to make a name for himself. And "Bam Bam" made a name for himself, though he also had a few more interesting names thrown at him before he even stepped into the ring against Lowther.

Prior to the fight, Rios was caught mocking Pacquiao trainer Freddie Roach's Parkinson's disease on video during a training session. Rios tried apologizing for the bad joke, but his lack of couth was magnified by a lack of discipline by his inability to make the 138-pound catchweight.

Rios had to fork over $5,000 for the extra two pounds—then he proceeded to pound on Lowther. Bam Bam pressured Lowther from the opening bell, stalking and landing accurate, powerful punches. All Lowther could do was score with a sporadic left hook, which harmlessly bounced off Rios' head. The few times Lowther thought he had Rios lined up, he was usually too slow to pull the trigger, and Rios easily slipped out of harm's way.

By the fourth round, it was obvious Rios was in firm control, and it appeared to be just a matter of time before the fight was to be stopped. In fact, it was a dubious choice by Lowther's corner to even let him out for the fifth round. Rios, sensing the end was near, slammed some hard lefts to the body and caught Lowther a few times to the head. With Lowther's head snapping back and his legs appearing on the brink of buckling, referee Raul Caiz Jr. stepped in to make a correct stoppage at 2:17 of the fifth round.

Rios was originally scheduled to fight December 4, on a Top Rank pay-per-view card, and said coming in late was the reason he was overweight.

"I really needed this," Rios said. "I had two weeks' notice. I was too heavy in camp and sluggish, but we got through it."

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Welterweight
Location: Dallas, TX
Date: November 13, 2010
Television: HBO Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Top Rank
Referee: Raul Caiz Jr. (USA)

Brandon Rios
Age: 24 • **Weight:** 140¼
Residence: Oxnard, CA
Birthplace: Lubbock, TX
Record: 26-0-1 (19)
Ring Ranking: 5

Omri Lowther
Age: 26 • **Weight:** 137½
Residence: Toronto, Canada
Birthplace: Atlanta, GA
Record: 14-3 (10)

NO JOKE
Rios was way too much for Lowther

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Mike Jones W 10 Jesus Soto-Karass

The undefeated Jones was lucky to stay that way after his bruising 10-rounder with Soto-Karass ended in a majority decision in the Philadelphian's favor. It was the chief preliminary bout on the Manny Pacquiao-Antonio Margarito card at Cowboys Stadium and was supposed to be something of a coming-out party for Jones. Instead, it turned out to be a give-and-take struggle that could have gone either way.

Jones got off to a promising start, rocking Soro-Karass with a right hand late in the opening round. He picked up where he left off in the second, knocking Soto-Karass into the ropes. There was little doubt that Soto-Karass was stunned, and Jones decided to go for broke, firing a prolonged barrage at his opponent.

It proved to be a major mistake. Soto-Karass absorbed some solid shots but never went down, and Jones punched himself out going for the quick finish. By the end of the round, Soto-Karass was firing back and landing.

Despite bleeding from a cut over his right eye, Soto-Karass counterattacked in the third and punished the weary Jones with jarring punches. Both scored in the fourth, but Soto-Karass' blows appeared more damaging.

Jones started well over the next four rounds, but Soto-Karass always came on strong in the later part of the rounds. These were difficult rounds to score. But by the ninth, Jones seemed to get his second wind and finished the fight strongly, especially in the 10th, which was his best since the near-fatal second.

Judge Gale Van Hoy scored it even at 94-94 (the same as THE RING), while Levi Martinez saw it for Jones, 95-94. Somehow, Sergio Caiz came up with a questionable 97-93 score for Jones, which was hardly indicative of what took place in the ring.

MATCH STATS

Division: Welterweight
Location: Arlington, TX
Date: November 13, 2010
Television: HBO Pay-Per-View
Promoters: Top Rank, Peltz Boxing
Referee: Rafael Ramos (USA)

Mike Jones
Age: 27 • **Weight:** 145½
Residence: Philadelphia, PA
Birthplace: Philadelphia, PA
Record: 23-0 (18)

Jesus Soto-Karass
Age: 28 • **Weight:** 147
Residence: Los Angeles, CA
Birthplace: Los Mochis, Mexico
Record: 24-5-3 (16)

Edwin Rodriguez KO 9 James McGirt Jr.

Rodriguez is too green for a spot in Showtime's super middleweight tournament, but don't be surprised if the New England prospect is among the division's top remaining contenders by the time the "Super Six" fallout has cleared.

In what represented a modest step up in class, Rodriguez gradually broke down McGirt Jr. en route to a ninth-round TKO in a *ShoBox* main event at Scheels Arena. Referee Mark Nelson called off what had become a one-sided affair 1:57 into the ninth round as "La Bomba" methodically bombed McGirt Jr. along the ropes.

It was a competitive fight for three rounds as McGirt Jr., the son of former two-time beltholder Buddy McGirt (who worked his son's corner), presented difficulties for Rodriguez with his southpaw stance, high-handed guard, and slight height advantage. Both fighters let loose in the opening round, but Rodriguez' consistent body attack seemed to be enough to give him the edge in a round in which neither man landed anything of significance.

McGirt Jr., who had won three straight, was looking for some payback against Rodriguez promoter Lou DiBella, who released McGirt Jr. from his promotional contract after a January 2009 points loss to Angel Hernandez.

It appeared McGirt Jr. had a chance in rounds two and three, when he landed the cleaner shots. McGirt Jr. countered well, fought with poise, and clearly had the faster hands. He just didn't have the power to keep Rodriguez off him, and, in the fourth, he began to struggle with La Bomba's pressure and body attack.

"The first three or four rounds, I had to slow down a little because I knew I was going to have to break him down. He was taking my shots so well," Rodriguez told the Worcester (Massachusetts) *Telegram & Gazette*. "But as the fight went on, I got more comfortable. I kept getting stronger, and he kept getting weaker."

Rodriguez persistently targeted the body and wore down McGirt Jr. during the fourth, fifth, and sixth rounds. Rodriguez took complete command in the seventh when his heavy bombs began to consistenly get past McGirt Jr.'s high guard.

As he grew discouraged, McGirt Jr. became increasingly passive. After the one-sided eighth, both his father and ref Nelson warned McGirt Jr. that they were ready to pull the plug if he didn't pick up the pace. After Rodriguez landed another hard combination, Nelson kept his promise by stepping in with 63 seconds remaining in the ninth.

Next up for Rodriguez is another former champ's son, Aaron Pryor Jr., January 14 on ESPN2. Shortly after the McGirt fight, Rodriguez flew to England to help Carl Froch prepare for his "Super Six" showdown with Arthur Abraham.

MATCH STATS

Division: Super Middleweight
Location: Fargo, ND
Date: November 5, 2010
Television: Showtime
Promoter: DiBella Entertainment
Referee: Mark Nelson (USA)

Edwin Rodriguez
Age: 25 • **Weight:** 166¼
Residence: Worcester, MA
Birth Place:
Moca, Dominican Republic
Record: 17-0 (13)

James McGirt Jr.
Age: 27
Weight: 167¾
Residence: Vero Beach, FL
Birthplace: Brentwood, NY
Record: 22-3-1 (11)

ON THE ROPES
Jones punches himself out going for quick win

PHOTO BY TOM PENNINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

ZAB JAB
Judah held off Matthysse for close win

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Zab Judah W 12 Lucas Matthysse

The fight was slated to be all about a return of former RING welterweight champion "Super" Judah, who was making his second-straight appearance in the junior welterweight division, a weight class in which the Brooklynite flourished for the better part of a decade early in his career.

There were many high-profile fights awaiting him at 140 pounds, provided he could get past Argentinean Matthysse. And while Judah wasn't particularly impressive, he displayed tight defense, a crisp jab, and the heart so many have questioned in the past rising off the canvas to eke out a split decision against the previously undefeated Matthysse at the Prudential Center.

The fight was a tentative affair from the onset, with Judah content to fire his southpaw jab and counter the more aggressive Matthysse. Many of the first seven rounds played out the same way as Matthysse focused his attack on Judah's body, while Judah controlled the distance and looked to land his trademark counter left uppercut.

In round three, a clash of heads opened up a cut over Judah's left eye that later required stitches, but, unlike in the past, Judah didn't lose his focus. He continued to box effectively, playing matador to Matthysse's bull. In round eight, Judah stepped on the pedal a bit and showed some of his usual tenacity, landing several hard lefts on Matthysse.

Matthysse began finding a home for his power shots in round nine in what was by far his best effort to that point. Things got really interesting in round 10 as Matthysse dropped Judah, punching through his guard with a string of hard rights and truly displaying his power. Judah beat referee Earl Brown's count and immediately landed power shots of his own when action resumed.

Matthysse sensed that Judah was tiring, thanks to his persistent attack to the body. He continued to pour it on in the 11th and sought to close the show in the final round but couldn't finish off Judah, who appeared on HBO for the first time since his technical decision loss to Joshua Clottey in August 2008.

Judge Waleska Roldan (New York) scored it 114-113 in favor of Matthysse, but was overruled by Joseph Pasquale (New Jersey) and Hilton Whitaker (New Jersey), both of whom had it 114-113 for Judah. THE RING scored it 115-112 for Judah.

"I took no shortcuts, and it paid off," said Judah, who had fought just 25 rounds in the past three years. "Conditioning is what kept me in the fight. I have a lot of respect for Matthysse; he's a very strong fighter. I think in the future, you're going to see a lot of Lucas, but tonight was my night."

There was talk of Judah fighting the winner of the December 11 bout between Victor Ortiz and Lamont Peterson.

Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Welterweight
Location: Newark, NJ
Date: November 6, 2010
Television: HBO
Promoters: Main Events, Golden Boy Promotions
Referee: Earl Brown (USA)

Zab Judah
Age: 33
Weight: 139
Residence: Las Vegas, NV
Birthplace: Brooklyn, NY
Record: 40-6 (27)

Lucas Matthysse
Age: 28
Weight: 140
Residence: Buenos Aires, Argentina
Birthplace: Trelew, Argentina
Record: 27-1 (25)

Robert Guerrero W 10 Vincente Escobedo

The theme was a familiar one—friends outside the ring turned combatants inside the squared circle. This particular matchup had significant stakes to boot. While no title was on the line, the fight was televised on HBO's *Boxing After Dark*, the winner to move on, and the loser to go back to the drawing board.

Guerrero seized the opportunity, displaying perhaps the best effort of his career in outpointing former Olympian Escobedo over 10 action-packed rounds at the Prudential Center.

The pair of Mexican-Americans from California knew each other from their days in the amateur ranks, where they faced each other thrice, with Guerrero coming out on top twice. Those encounters seemed to serve him well, as he was able to time Escobedo and get the better of most exchanges.

Guerrero set the tempo early, stunning Escobedo in the opening round with an aggressive two-fisted attack from his southpaw stance. Things got worse for Escobedo as a clash of heads opened up a nasty gash above his left ear toward the end of the first round.

The weapon of choice for Guerrero was the right hook, which he put to good use in the early moments of round three, dropping Escobedo with a one-two after a quick exchange on the inside.

Following the knockdown, Escobedo returned fire, mixing it up with Guerrero and landing many clear shots of his own. But it was evident as the fight wore on that Escobedo's punches didn't have much effect on Guerrero, who appeared to be much bigger, as "The Ghost" continued to walk him down no matter what was coming back from Escobedo.

A clash of heads opened up another cut, this time over Escobedo's right eye, moments after the opening bell for round five. Following the timeout due to the cut, Guerrero began to pour it on Escobedo, hurting him badly and appearing to knock him down, but referee Ricardo Vera called it a slip.

Guerrero picked up where he left off in round six, as he dropped Escobedo for the second time in the contest, this time with a single punch, a looping left uppercut. Escobedo again beat the count and continued to fight back.

Escobedo put on a furious rally down the stretch, landing often, but it was a case of too little, too late, as the two knockdowns and early rounds were too much to overcome.

All three judges agreed on the victor. Eugenia Williams (New Jersey) had it 100-88, Alan Rubenstein (Pennsylvania) had it 98-90 and Debra Barnes (New Jersey) scored it 96-92, all in favor of Guerrero. THE RING agreed with Barnes' tally.

"Last fight I had on HBO was with Joel Casamayor, and nobody looks good against Casamayor, I don't care who it is," said Guerrero, who is slated to face the winner of the November 27 bout between RING lightweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez and Michael Katsidis. "Business is business. We are friends, but you gotta do what you gotta do. You gotta put friendship aside."

Escobedo, who stated he would look to campaign at junior lightweight following the loss, had something to celebrate as he proposed to his longtime girlfriend in the ring at the conclusion of the bout.

Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS

Division: Lightweight • **Location:** Newark, NJ • **Date:** November 6, 2010
Television: HBO • **Promoters:** Main Events, Golden Boy Promotions
Referee: Ricardo Vera (USA)

Robert Guerrero	Vincente Escobedo
Age: 27 • **Weight:** 133	**Age:** 29
Residence: Gilroy, CA	**Weight:** 134
Birthplace: Gilroy, CA	**Residence:** Los Angeles, CA
Record: 28-1-1 (18)	**Birthplace:** Woodland, CA
Ring Ranking: 10	**Record:** 22-3 (14)

FRIENDLY RIVALS
Guerrero builds an early lead

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

David Lemieux KO 1 Hector Camacho Jr.

There is nothing that excites the fans more in boxing than a knockout artist, and, right now, Lemieux could be among the best pound-for-pound swatters on the planet.

This time at Montreal's Bell Centre, Camacho Jr. was the latest B-list fighter who was supposed to expose weaknesses in Lemieux's game, but ultimately the latest B-list fighter who couldn't survive the first round. At 32, the erstwhile junior welterweight contender, circa 2001, figured to still have enough speed and slickness in his repertoire to potentially frustrate and confuse Lemieux, even if he was carrying an additional 20 pounds at this advanced stage of his career.

That Camacho Jr. had only been stopped once, by Russian Andrey Tsurkan, meant little against a fighter of Lemieux's punching caliber. The problem was Camacho Jr. showed fast hands, but no ring mobility, which is fatal against a powerhouse such as Lemieux.

Camacho Jr. landed a few straight lefts out of his southpaw stance, but Lemieux merely walked through them as he stalked his veteran foe with measured aggression. Though moving on flat feet, Camacho Jr. appeared calm as he shot his jab and feinted to draw openings. His demeanor quickly changed, however, when a potent right from Lemieux that caught him high on the forehead wobbled him. Lemieux rattled Camacho Jr. with another combination that sent him into full retreat, and it was as he backed to the ropes that Lemieux staged his impressive finishing work.

His left held low, Camacho Jr. had turned his body with his left glove opened and blocking the side of his face. Still, Lemieux launched a right hand that snuck just inside Camacho Jr.'s guard and impacted on his cheekbone. The punch was so powerful that Camacho Jr. was rendered instantly unconscious. He twisted sideways and folded to the canvas where he lay still for several minutes in eerie stillness. Referee Michael Griffin waived it over immediately.

The knockout was officially clocked at the 3:00 mark of the first round. Several minutes later, when he was revived and sitting on a stool, having his gloves being cut off by his corner, Camacho Jr. was still scrambled and unsure of what exactly had just transpired.

Lemieux is scheduled to return to the Bell Centre for his next bout, but there are now whispers that his promoter, Group Yvon Michel, might be looking to get him a shot at one of the alphabet belts sometime late next year.

MATCH STATS

Division: Middleweight • **Location:** Montreal, Canada
Date: October 29, 2010 • **Promoter:** GYM (Groupe Yvon Michel)
Referee: Michael Griffin (Canada)

David Lemieux	Hector Camacho Jr.
Age: 21 • **Weight:** 159	**Age:** 32 • **Weight:** 159
Residence: Montreal, Canada	**Residence:** Orlando, FL
Birthplace: Montreal, Canada	**Birthplace:** San Juan, Puerto Rico
Record: 24-0 (23)	**Record:** 54-3-1 (26)

Roman Gonzalez KO 2 Francisco Rosas

Unbeaten knockout artist "Chocolatito" Gonzalez impressively acquired the meaningless WBA "interim" 108-pound belt as he dropped grudge rival "Chiquita" Rosas three times in scoring a very quick demolition at 1:38 of the second round at Ryogoku Sumo Arena.

Chocolatito simply looked awesome as he stunned the Japanese crowd, some of whom still remembered the Nicaraguan's coronation at the expense of Japanese defending WBA strawweight titlist Yutaka Niida in 2008. Gonzalez said, "I wasn't in good shape when I fought Rosas in his home turf of Mexico in February of the previous year." Gonzalez won a 12-round majority decision at 105 pounds that night. With both moving up to the 108-pound category, the weight in which Rosas began his career, many felt it would be an even more competitive fight.

But the Nicaraguan beautifully caught the game and durable Mexican with solid, accurate, and effective uppercuts, with which he sent Rosas sprawling to the deck on three occasions to force an automatic stoppage due to the three-knockdown rule.

Gonzalez, a previous pupil of the late great Alexis Arguello, reminds us of the devastating punching ability of the explosive "Thin Man," even at 108 pounds. With that level of punching power, he has the potential to invade and conquer the 112-pound category in the future. For now, he'll look toward the bigger names in the loaded junior flyweight division, including world champion Giovani Segura, former champ Ivan Calderon, and former beltholders Omar Nino, Rodel Mayol, Carlos Tamara, and Brian Viloria.

For those keeping score, Gonzalez is the third WBA beltholder in the division. Segura is the organization's "super" champion, while Juan Carlos Reveco is the "regular" titlist.

Joe Koizumi

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Flyweight
Location: Tokyo, Japan
Date: October 24, 2010
Promoter: Teiken Promotions
Referee: Takeshi Shimakawa (Japan)

Roman Gonzalez	Francisco Rosas
Age: 23 • **Weight:** 107¾	**Age:** 30 • **Weight:** 108
Residence: Managua, Nicaragua	**Residence:** San Lorenzo, Mexico
Birthplace: Managua, Nicaragua	**Birthplace:** Ciudad Neza, Mexico
Record: 27-0 (23)	**Record:** 21-8-2 (12)

Toshiaki Nishioka W 12 Rendall Munroe

Nishioka kept his WBC junior featherweight belt in his fifth defense with an impressive display of heart as he pounded out a hard-fought but eventually lopsided decision against mandatory challenger Munroe over 12 furious rounds at Ryogoku Sumo Arena.

The official verdict was identically 119-109 by all three judges: James Jen-Kin (USA), David Sutherland (USA), and Alejandro Rochin (Mexico).

It was the 34-year-old champ's career-best performance, even if he failed to extend his kayo streak in title defenses. In an encounter of fluid southpaws, Nishioka showed his finesse and flash in coping with the willing mixer from England, where he was called Britain's most famous garbage man. The garbage man collected admiration from the Japanese people, but not the belt from Nishioka.

Nishioka ignited fireworks from the outset, utilizing faster southpaw jabs and quick right-left combinations to take the initiative in the opening session. He maintained the pressure on the game but still nervous challenger, piling up points with quicker hands. After the fourth, the open-scoring system indicated 40-36 and 39-37 twice in favor of Nishioka.

Munroe attempted to accelerate his attack from the fifth, but it was Nishioka who turned more aggressive in scoring with left crosses and left uppercuts to the belly. The slick-punching beltholder looked to have found his range and rhythm as he controlled Munroe, who couldn't catch his elusive target.

The seventh saw Nishioka almost freeze Munroe with a vicious bodyshot, and the British challenger barely survived the critical moment. From there, Nishioka began to aim consistently at the breadbasket, which visibly paid off and weakened the still game and gallant Munroe. The second scores announced after the eighth on the open-scoring system were 79-73 by all the judges.

Hopelessly behind, Munroe desperately attempted to let loose and turn the tide from the ninth on, but it was Nishioka who swept the last four sessions by showing his superior skills, speed, and fighting spirit. In the final session, Nishioka accelerated his attack, pinned the garbage man to the ropes, and had him at bay with a flurry of punches.

Before the bout commenced, it had been regarded as a very compelling matchup of southpaw 122-pounders, but the result was a one-sided affair on the final scorecards. Nishioka was simply faster and cleverer than Munroe, who engaged in his first title bout.

A jubilant Nishioka said, "I really appreciate your warm support, with which behind me I could defeat such a tough and strong challenger. I'd like to dedicate this valuable victory to all."

Joe Koizumi

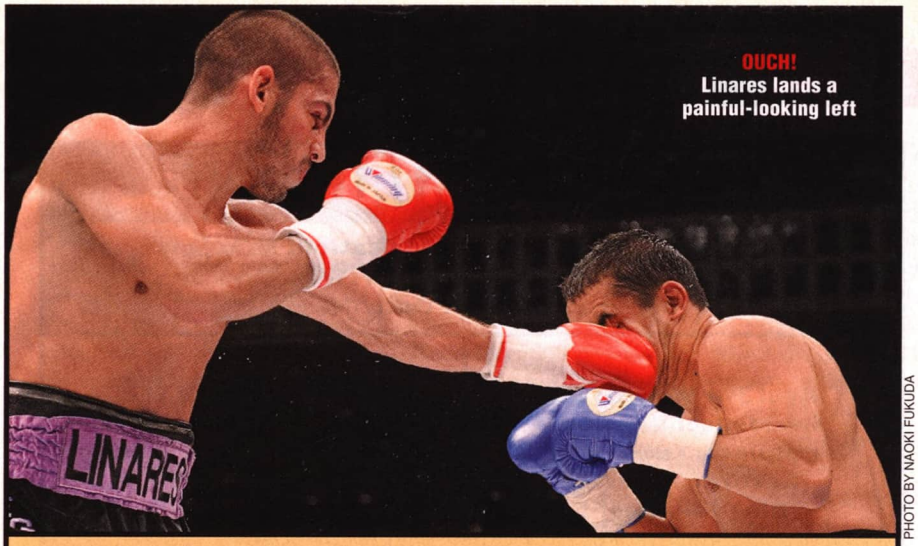
MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Featherweight • **Location:** Tokyo, Japan
Date: October 24, 2010 • **Promoter:** Teiken Promotions
Referee: Guadalupe Garcia (Mexico)

Toshiaki Nishioka	Rendall Munroe
Age: 34 • **Weight:** 121	**Age:** 30 • **Weight:** 120¼
Residence: Tokyo, Japan	**Residence:** Leicester, England
Birthplace: Kakogawa, Japan	**Birthplace:** Leicester, England
Record: 37-4-3 (23)	**Record:** 21-2 (9)
Ring Ranking: 1	**Ring Ranking:** 10

AN EYE FULL
Nishioka slams a right to Munroe's face

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



OUCH!
Linares lands a painful-looking left

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Jorge Linares KO 4 Jesus Chavez

In his third-straight win since his stunning October 2009 kayo loss to Juan Carlos Salgado, ex-beltholder Linares prevailed as ex-titlist "El Matador" Chavez retired on the stool after the fourth round at Ryogoku Sumo Arena.

Linares proved too fast and snappy for the declining Mexican from the outset, and it was a matter of time before the Japan-based Venezuelan finished the veteran. Chavez complained of pain on the left shoulder and didn't make any effort to raise himself from his stool.

Taller, slicker, and quicker, Linares scored at will from a comfortable distance with a pretty jab while Chavez struggled to get in close. Linares began scoring with a right hook off the jab within the first minute of the fight. He rattled Chavez with a four-punch combo 15 seconds before the bell. Chavez countered with a hard right to the face. That only appeared to anger Linares, who came back with a left hook and a right hand upstairs that drove Chavez back into the ropes, where Linares flurried until the bell.

A poised Linares continued to control the distance while popping Chavez at will with jabs and right crosses in the second. He increased his body attack and combination punching in the third, and rocked Chavez in the final 20 seconds of the round with several flush rights to the chin. The jabs and right hands continued to land at will in the fourth, while Chavez was only able to get through with an occasional right hand that barely caught Linares' attention. After the round, Chavez told referee Yuji Fukuchi he couldn't continue.

It could be the end of the road for Chavez, who suffered his fourth-straight loss. It wasn't that long ago that Chavez had brief reigns as the WBC junior lightweight beltholder and IBF lightweight titlist. He lost those belts to Erik Morales (L 12) and Julio Diaz (KO by 3), respectively. In between those losses was an 11th-round stoppage of Leavander Johnson that will probably be his most memorable win, if only for the tragic death of Johnson due to injuries suffered in the bout. Chavez also has fallen to Michael Katsidis (KO by 8), David Diaz (L 10), and Humberto Soto (L 10) during his current slide.

Joe Koizumi

MATCH STATS

Division: Lightweight • **Location:** Tokyo, Japan • **Date:** October 24, 2010
Promoter: Teiken Promotions, Golden Boy Promotions
Referee: Yuji Fukuchi (Japan)

Jorge Linares
Age: 25 • **Weight:** 133
Residence: Tokyo, Japan
Birthplace: Barinas, Venezuela
Record: 30-1 (19)
Ring Ranking: 7

Jesus Chavez
Age: 37 • **Weight:** 133
Residence: Austin, TX
Birthplace: Delicias, Mexico
Record: 44-8 (30)

MATCH STATS

Division: Middleweight
Location: Rostock, Germany
Date: October 30, 2010
Promoter: Sauerland Events
Referee: Marlon Wright (Canada)

Sebastian Sylvester
Age: 30
Weight: 159¾
Residence: Greifswald, Germany
Birthplace: Greifswald, Germany
Record: 34-3-1 (16)
Ring Ranking: 4

Mahir Oral
Age: 30
Weight: 159¾
Residence: Hamburg, Germany
Birthplace: Hamburg, Germany
Record: 28-3-2 (11)

HURRICANE FORCE
Sylvester was way too strong for Oral

Sebastian Sylvester W 12 Mahir Oral

By no fault of his own, Germany's Sylvester has had to prove himself more since claiming a middleweight belt than before winning it. The IBF strap he captured in his backyard via split decision against Giovanni Lorenzo last September had been left vacant by Arthur Abraham, who in turn had claimed it after then-legit world champion Jermain Taylor vacated. Meanwhile, Sylvester's claim to the throne comes with a linear champion, Sergio Martinez, atop the division.

Toss in a one-sided points loss to Felix Sturm in a November 2008 shot at the WBA belt, an eight-round kayo loss to Amin Asikainen in June 2006, and a freak first-round stoppage loss in his pro debut, and Sylvester's doubters have plenty of ammunition.

Thirty-eight fights into his career and three defenses into his reign, however, Sylvester is slowly gaining acceptance as an elite middleweight. He strengthened his case at Town Halle with an impressively one-sided decision against countryman Oral, a strong-chinned challenger who lasted 10 rounds with Abraham in June 2009 before his corner stopped it.

"Hurricane" Sylvester took over after the early rounds, scored three knockdowns, and prevailed by wide margins on all three official cards. Berit Andreasen (Denmark) had it 119-106, while Franco Ciminale (Italy) and Francesco Rega (Italy) each scored it 117-107.

"I am pleased with my performance," Sylvester said. "I knew I had to catch him to the body. Our game plan worked very well."

The 6'1" Oral gave Sylvester problems early with his reach and tenacity. The 5'7½" Sylvester also suffered a vertical cut above his right eye from an accidental clash of heads in the second round.

But Sylvester seized command in the fourth when he stunned "Lion" Oral with a right to the head. Oral stayed on his feet but absorbed punishment throughout the round. He was never competitive again. Sylvester walked through whatever firepower Oral had left though Oral showed plenty of guts in taking a world-class beating en route to the final bell.

Sylvester's relentless body attack set up a left hook to the jaw that dropped Oral in the eighth. Oral was dropped again in the ninth, absorbed more punishment in the 10th, and hit the floor again in the 11th. He barely managed to get through the 12th.

"His bodyshots really killed me," Oral said. "I am very tall for a middleweight, so I am quite open to body shots. He fought very well and deserved to win. I am obviously very, very disappointed."

Next up for Sylvester is a mandatory defense against Daniel Geale. Geale, ranked fifth by THE RING, knocked out Roman Karmazin the following night to clinch the shot at Sylvester, who fought to a draw with Karmazin in June. ■

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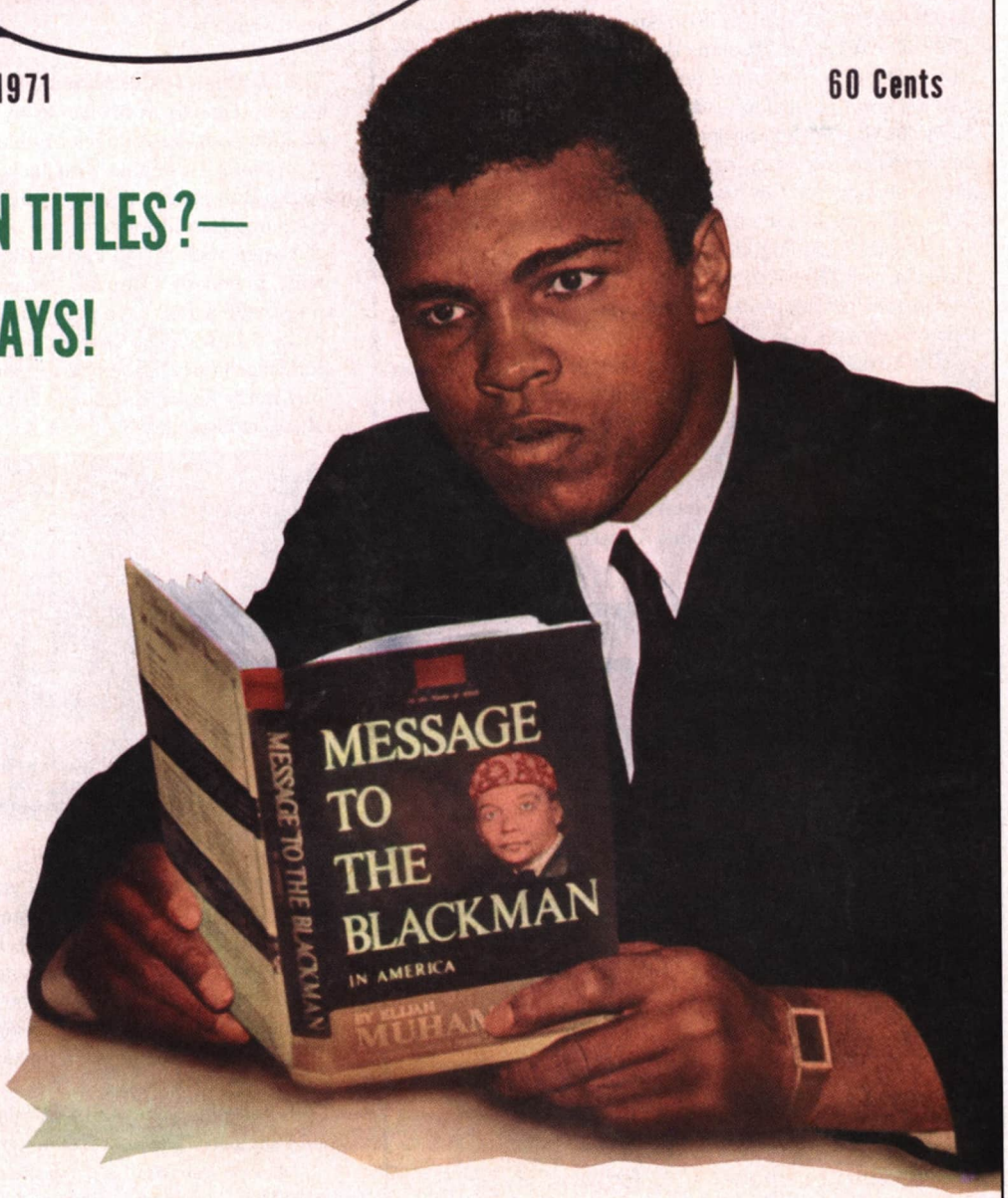


BIRTHDAY BASH
From left to right: Ray Robinson, Max Schmeling, Louis, Billy Conn, Gregory Peck, and Chuck Connors gather around Joe's cake

"Big Bash For Louis On His 57th Birthday: Notables Galore Honor Brown Bomber" by Ron Amos documents the gala affair held at Circus Maximus theatre-restaurant at Caesars Palace. The proceeds of the testimonial dinner-show went to the "Joe Louis Foundation—designed to aid worthy members of the boxing profession in their hour of need and further dedicated to perpetuating the memory of a man who has always been a credit to his profession and his country."

Joey Bishop was the master of ceremonies, assisted by an all-star cast, including Don Rickles, Jimmy Durante, Danny Thomas, and Don Adams. B.B. King, Johnny Mathis, Tony Martin, Joe Williams, Andy Williams, and others provided the musical segment.

The boxing fraternity was represented by Ray Robinson, Lou Nova, Gene Fullmer, and Billy Conn. Louis' old rival Max Schmeling flew in from Germany for the tribute.

Films, radio highlights, tape recordings, as well as commemorative messages from giants of the sports politics, and the world of entertainment also entertained the SRO audience of more than 1,000. Even President Richard M. Nixon wrote a commemorative tribute.

WORLD CHAMPIONS

For the period ended July 15, 1971

Heavyweight	**Lightweight**
Joe Frazier	Ken Buchanan
Light Heavyweight	**Junior Lightweight**
Bob Foster	Hiroshi Kobayashi
Middleweight	**Featherweight**
Carlos Monzon	Kuniaki Shibata
Welterweight	**Bantamweight**
Jose Napoles	Ruben Olivares
Junion Welterweight	**Flyweight**
Nicolino Loche	Erbito Salvarria

COVER STORY: "Fleischer's All-Time Rating Of Clay" headline and the cover photograph of Muhammad Ali holding Elijah Muhammad's book are not really related. The image of Ali reading *Message To The Blackman* is more closely associated with the last six-paragraphs of the "Nat Fleischer Speaks Out!!!" editorial.

The US Supreme Court had just rendered an 8-0 decision in favor of Ali's claim that he refused to be inducted into the Armed Forces because he was a conscientious objector. And while Fleischer did not agree with Ali's stance, he did believe in the due process of the law and warned the "WBA, the New York Commission, and others who were so hasty in declaring Clay's championship forfeited in 1967 ... You may not agree with the decision," writes Fleischer. "But it is the verdict of the highest tribunal in the United States and, as such, must be respected, obeyed, and honored."

As far as Ali's place among the all-time greats was concerned, Fleischer, who rated Jack Johnson number one, writes: "I do not see Cassius Clay as a candidate for a place among the top-10 heavyweights."

"The KO Kings: Foster's Knockout Mark No. 1 In Light Heavy List" was the second part of a series by George Girsch that compared the knockout percentages of champions in each division. The 175-pound list begins with Jack Root and ends with reigning champ Bob Foster. The only other active fighter on the list was ex-champ Harold Johnson.

Foster, with a .745 knockout percentage tops the list of 28, while, to nobody's surprise, "Slapsie" Maxie Rosenbloom comes in last with a .062 kayo percentage. The other nine in the top 10 are as follows: Jose Torres (.644), Archie Moore (.614), Paul Berlenbach (.612), Bob Fitzsimmons (.561), Freddie Mills (.542), John Henry Lewis (.519), Jack Delaney (.488), Georges Carpentier (.481), and Root (.453).

EX-CHAMP
Patterson near the end of his career

"Patterson Calls It Fun At Age 36" by Nat Loubet looks at former heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson's ongoing career, nine years after losing the title to Sonny Liston.

"Frankly, Patterson, as of 1971, is a ham and egger. A rich ham and egger, a high-priced one," writes Loubet. "He gets $15,000 a fight, no matter who he may pull out of the grab bag."

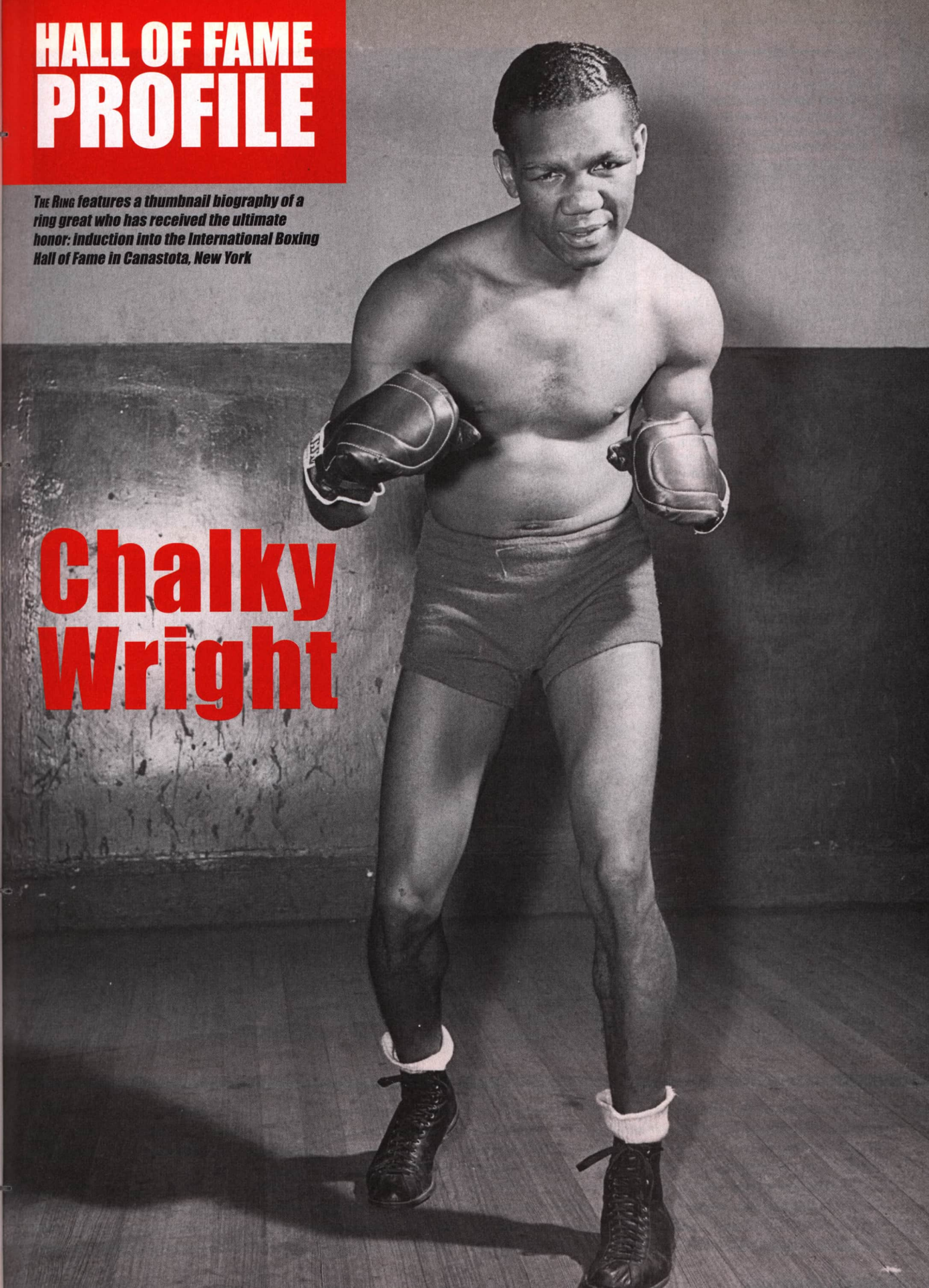
Loubet wonders what Patterson is "trying to prove, what in his chemistry, in his physical makeup, that forces him to go right on fighting?"

"I will quit when I think I am not of championship caliber," said Patterson. "I'm not ready to quit just yet. I feel fine."

Patterson also expressed a desire to fight Oscar Bonavena, which he did in 1972, winning a 10-round decision. Two fights later, Floyd was stopped by Muhammad Ali and never fought again. ■

HALL OF FAME PROFILE

The Ring features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

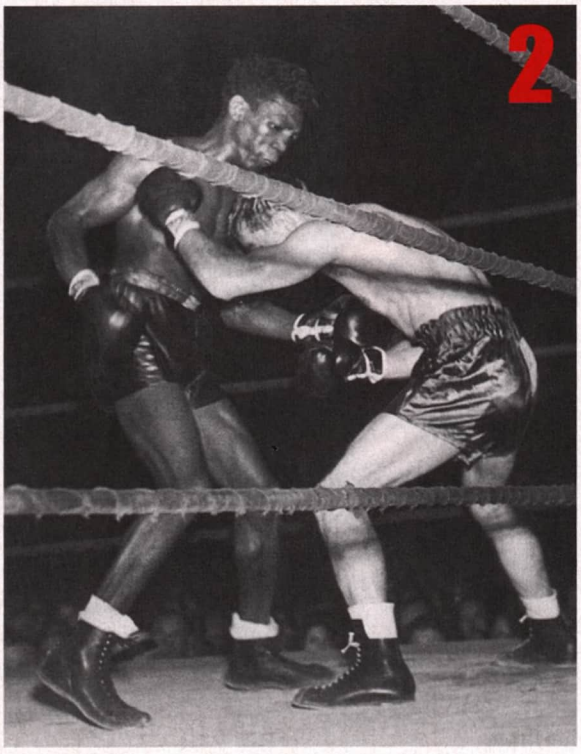


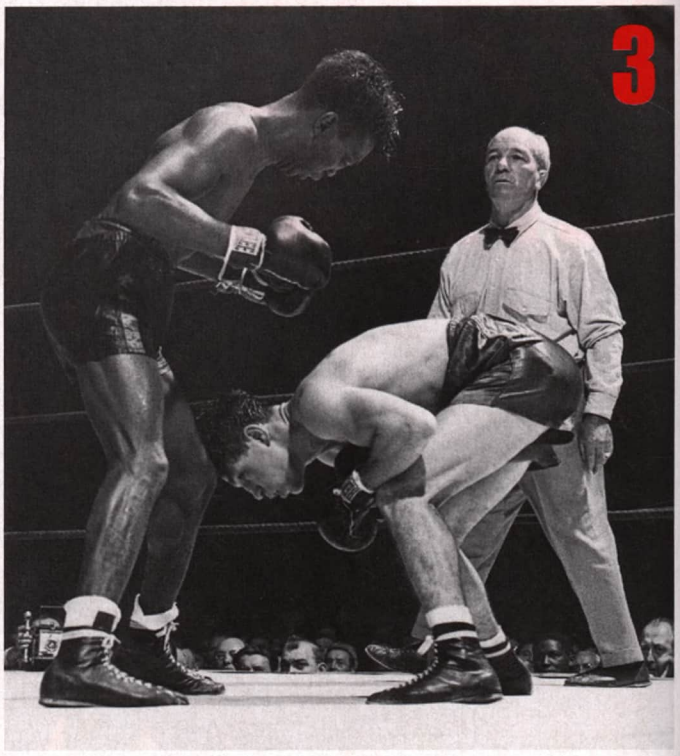
Chalky Wright

1. A CHAMPION AT LAST
After 13 years of toiling as a professional fighter, Wright finally gets his championship belt from RING editor and founder Nat Fleischer shortly after Wright won the title by knocking out Joey Archibald at Griffith Stadium in Washington, DC.

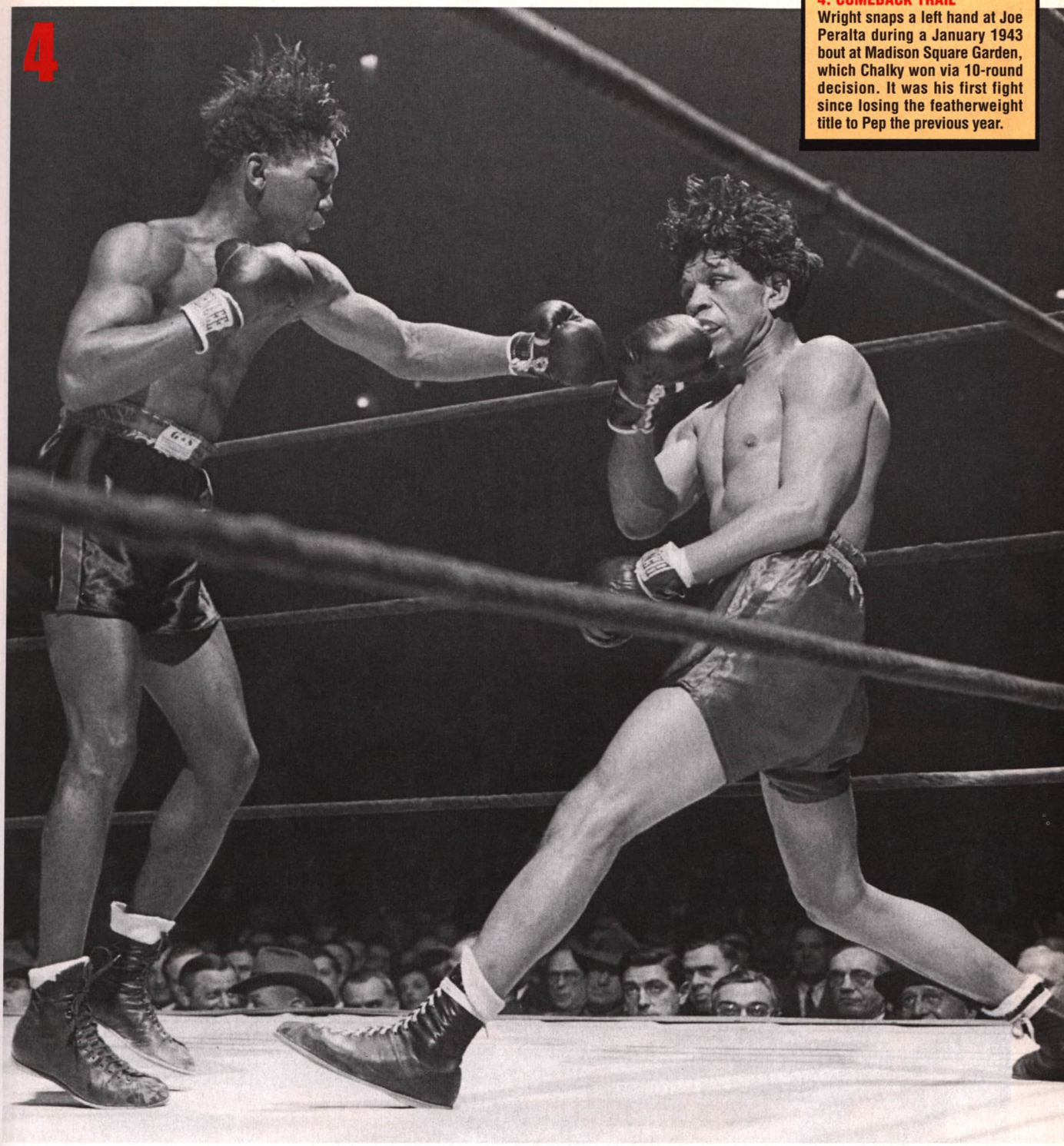
2. FIRST DEFENSE
Wright hammers away at the body of Harry Jeffra en route to a 10th-round TKO at Oriole Park, in Baltimore, Maryland. The victory also earned Chalky recognition as 126-pound champ by the powerful New York State Athletic Commission.

3. GARDEN PARTY
Lulu Costantino ducks as low as he can to avoid Wright's two-fisted attack. But the challenger from Far Rockaway, Queens, couldn't avoid enough of Chalky's punches and lost a 15-round decision at Madison Square Garden, the night of June 19, 1942. The referee is Billy Cavanaugh.





Birthdate: February 19, 1912
Date of Death: August 12, 1957
Birthplace: Unknown
Weight Class: Featherweight
Record: 106-43-18 (80) with 2 no-contests
Title Held: World Featherweight
Best Performances: Joey Archibald (KO 11), Harry Jeffra (KO 10), Lulu Costantino (W 15), Phil Terranova (KO 5), Sal Bartolo (W 8), Richie Lemos (KO 6), Leo Rodak (W 10), Jackie Wilson (W 10), Ray Lunny (W 10), Enrique Bolanos (W 10), Johnny Bratton (W 10), Joe Peralta (W 10, W10), Frankie Carto (KO 8), Willie Joyce (W 10)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 1997
Background: Both the birth and the death of the man born Albert Garfield Wright are shrouded in mystery. Many sources list his birthplace as Durango, Mexico. Others claim Durango, Colorado



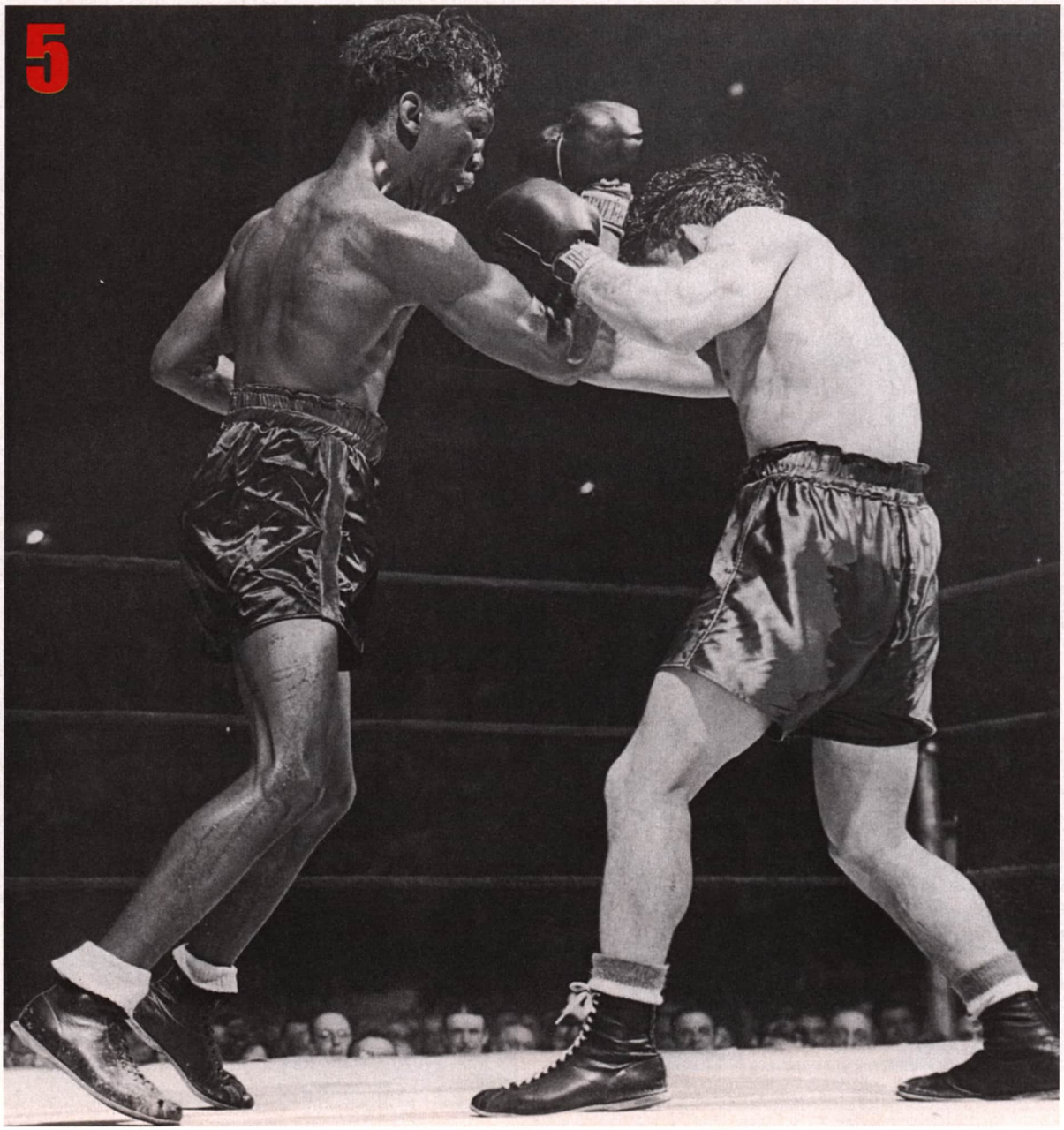
4. COMEBACK TRAIL
Wright snaps a left hand at Joe Peralta during a January 1943 bout at Madison Square Garden, which Chalky won via 10-round decision. It was his first fight since losing the featherweight title to Pep the previous year.

or Wilcox, Arizona. What is certain, however, is that his parents were migrant farm workers and that Wright and his mother settled in the Los Angeles area when he was a boy … Turned pro in February 1928, winning a four-round decision over Nilo Balles in San Bernardino, California … Maintained a busy and mainly winning schedule on the southern California club circuit, but fell short when he stepped up to take on top-notch fighters such as Freddie Miller, Baby Arizmendi, and Henry Armstrong … Worked as a chauffer for glamorous actress Mae West who helped him rekindle his career … "Mae West liked having characters around, especially those in the prizefight game," said historian Hank Kaplan, "and Chalky was an interesting fellow" … Even though he seldom weighed over the featherweight limit, Wright often fought much larger men. In 1940, he gave away 19 pounds to Joey Ferrando and still managed to score a fourth-round TKO … Even though he had stopped Wright in 1938, Armstrong was impressed

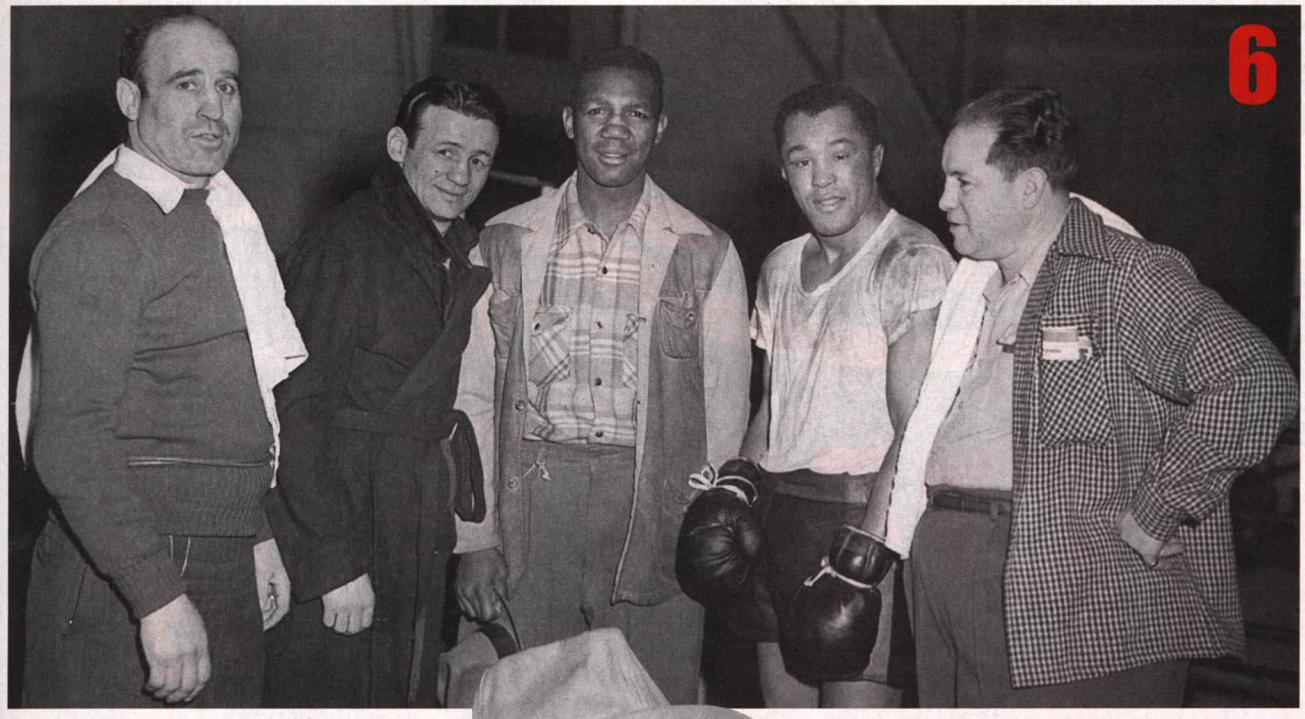
5. ELIMINATOR
Phil Terranova is under heavy fire from Wright in their June 1946 bout, which was an elimination bout for a crack at new champion Pep. Wright knocked down Terranova in the second and twice more in the fifth to win via knockout.

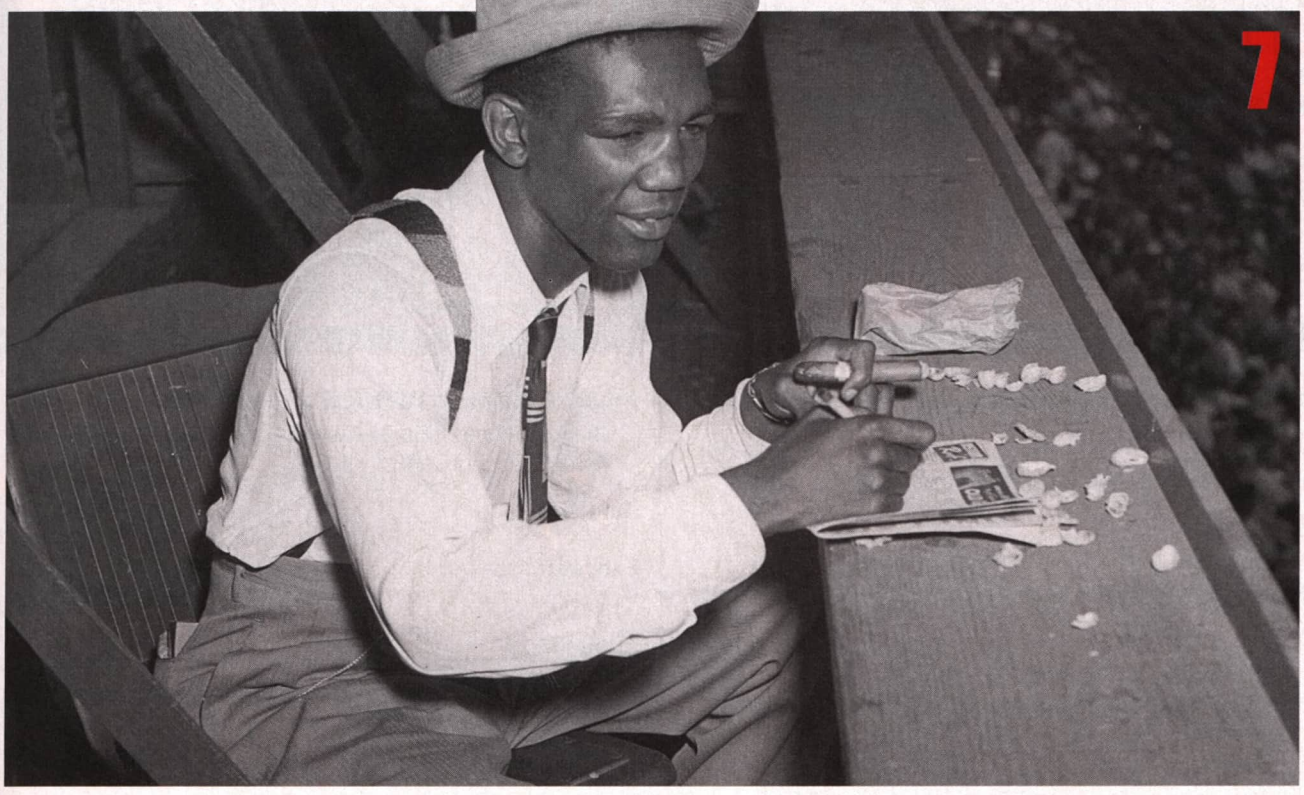
6. THREE CHAMPS & TWO TRAINERS
Wright (center) is joined by Mike Belloise (left) and "Pittsburgh" Jackie Wilson (right). All three boxers held various versions of the featherweight title during their careers. That's trainers Joe Stanley on the far left and Harry Gordon on the far right.

7. PEANUT GALLERY
Wright enjoys a day at the races, complete with cigar, tout sheet, and a bag of peanuts. The ex-champ lost most of his money gambling and was working at his mother's bakery shortly before his death.



with his style and hired him as a sparring partner, which led to powerful manager Eddie Walker adding Wright to his stable … Walker took him to the East Coast for a series of successful bouts that established Wright as a featherweight contender … Finally, after 13 years as a pro, he won the featherweight championship by knocking out Joey Archibald in September '41 … Successful defenses over Harry Jeffra and Lulu Costantino followed in '42, but, in November of that year, he lost the title to Willie Pep via 15-round decision … Wright was far from a shot fighter when he lost to Pep, however, he fought the great "Will O' The Wisp" three more times, once in an attempt to regain the title, and Chalky lost all four bouts … A streak of seven straight wins in 1945 and '46 ended with a decision loss to Enrique Bolanos, after which Wright steadily declined, having his final bout in March '48 … In





1955, *Hollywood Confidential Magazine* was preparing an expose speculating that West and Wright were lovers and sought a pay-off from the actress. When she refused, the November issue's cover headline said that West had an "Open Door Policy" when it came to dark-skinned males and claimed she had showered the fighter with gifts, bought a house for his mother, and bankrolled his divorce … In '57, the State of California put *Hollywood Confidential* on trial for attempted extortion. West supplied a sworn deposition denying that she had a romance with the fighter. On August 12, just before he was to testify, Wright drowned in the bathtub of his mother's house. West insisted her friend had been murdered, but Wright's death was officially ruled an accident … In 2003, THE RING rated Wright 75th among the greatest 100 punchers of all-time. ■

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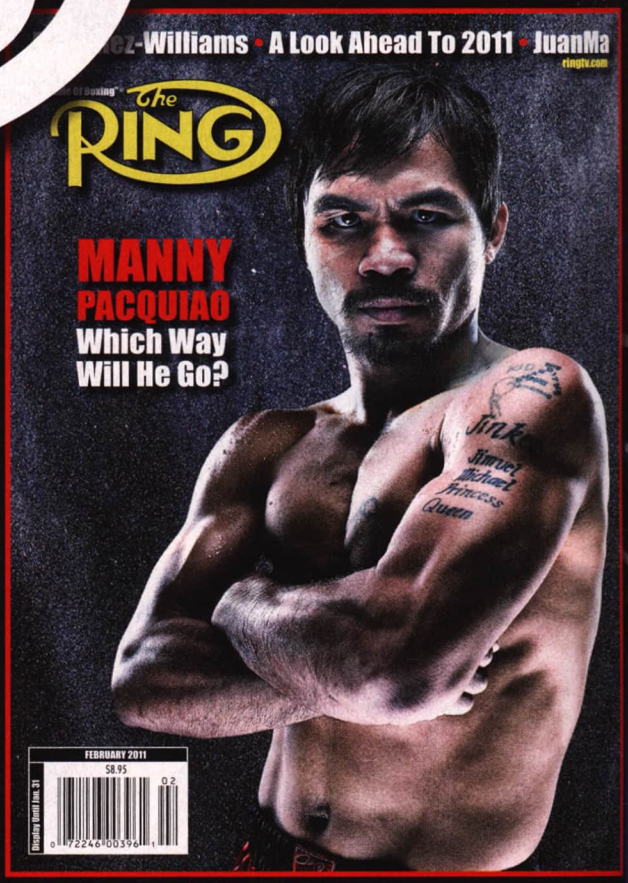

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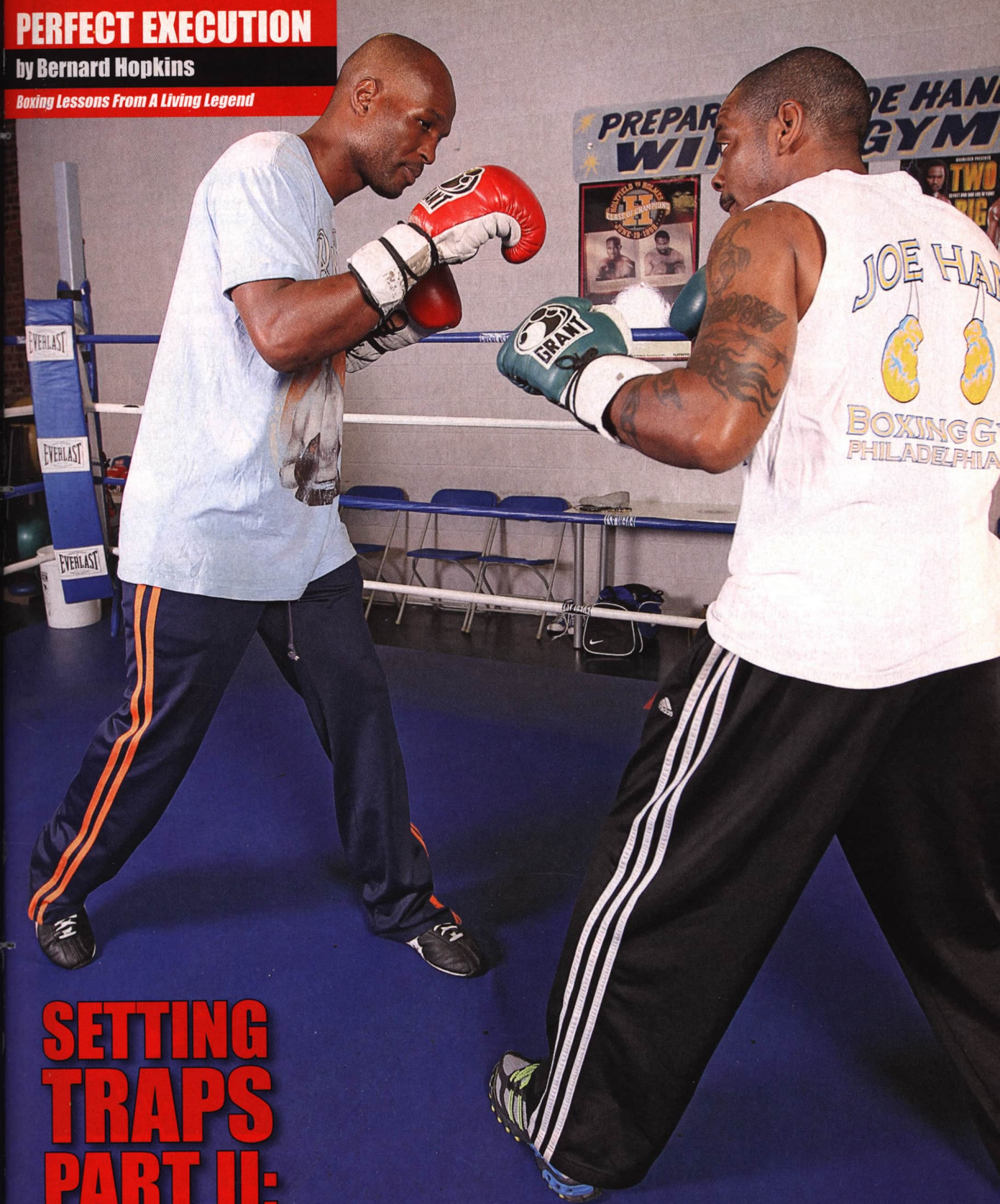
PERFECT EXECUTION

by Bernard Hopkins

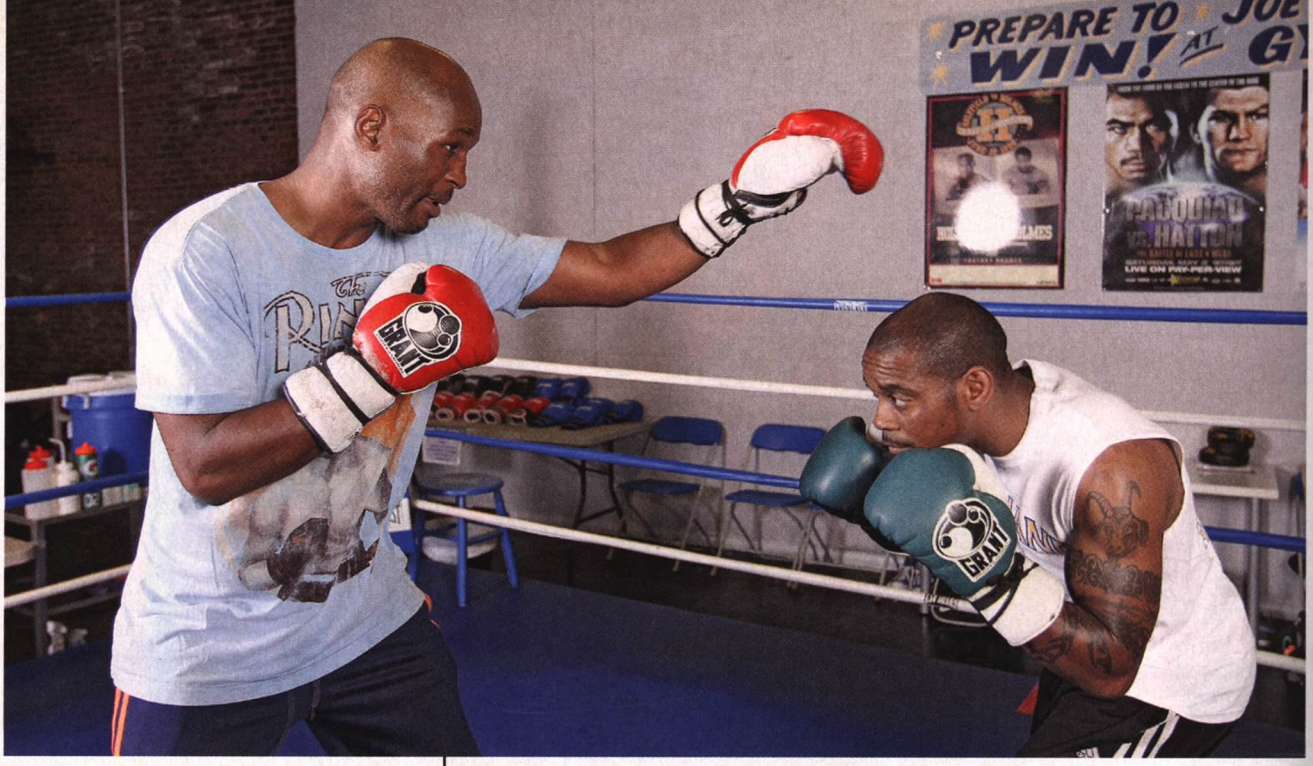
Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend



SETTING TRAPS PART II:

The Diversion

Photos by Ed Mulholland.
All photos taken at Joe Hand Boxing Gym in Philadelphia, PA.



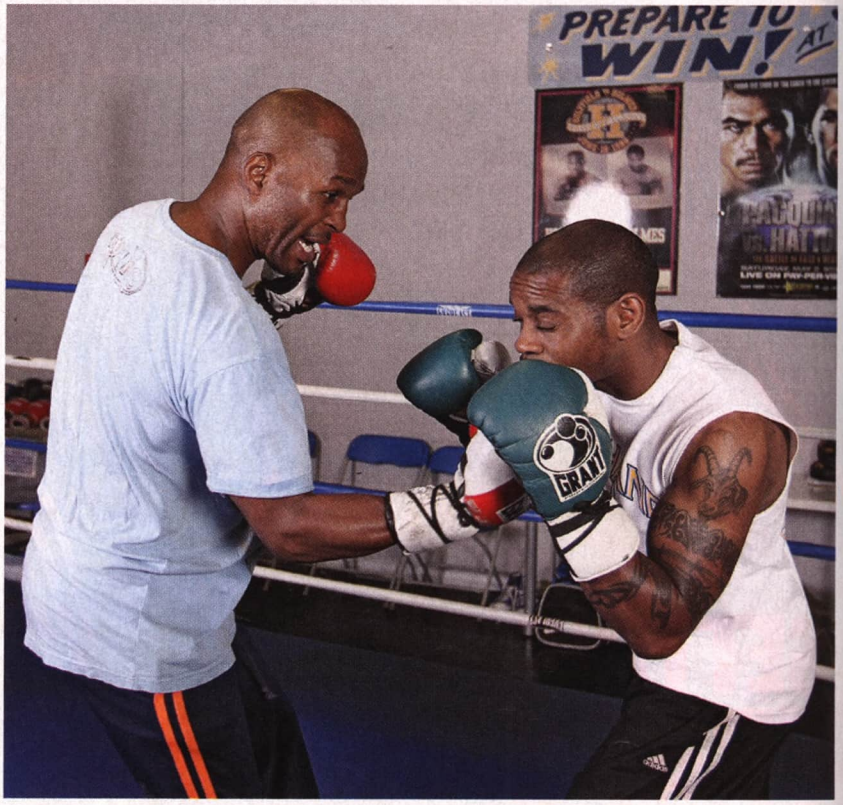
In the last issue, we talked about setting traps to get your opponent to do what you want him to do without him even knowing it. I showed you three of my favorites. In this issue, I'll show you a few more.

These are moves that you should practice when you're shadow boxing or when you're sparring so that you always have them ready to use. But you should always be thinking while you're in the ring too. Your corner can't see everything. Things are moving too fast. It's up to you to be able to think on your feet and always use your head. Always be thinking: *How can I get this guy? How can I get him to do what I want him to do so I can land my punches?*

That's your job, to be thinking about how you can outmaneuver and outsmart your man. It's not just about throwing punches. It's about outthinking your opponent. It's about getting position and always trying to be where you can hit him and he can't hit you. You're always looking for that angle, setting traps, getting position on him. That's what it's about.

When you're watching a fight from home on your couch, you probably don't know most of this stuff is going on. But it is. I'm always setting traps, trying to outthink my opponent. The best fighters always do.

BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

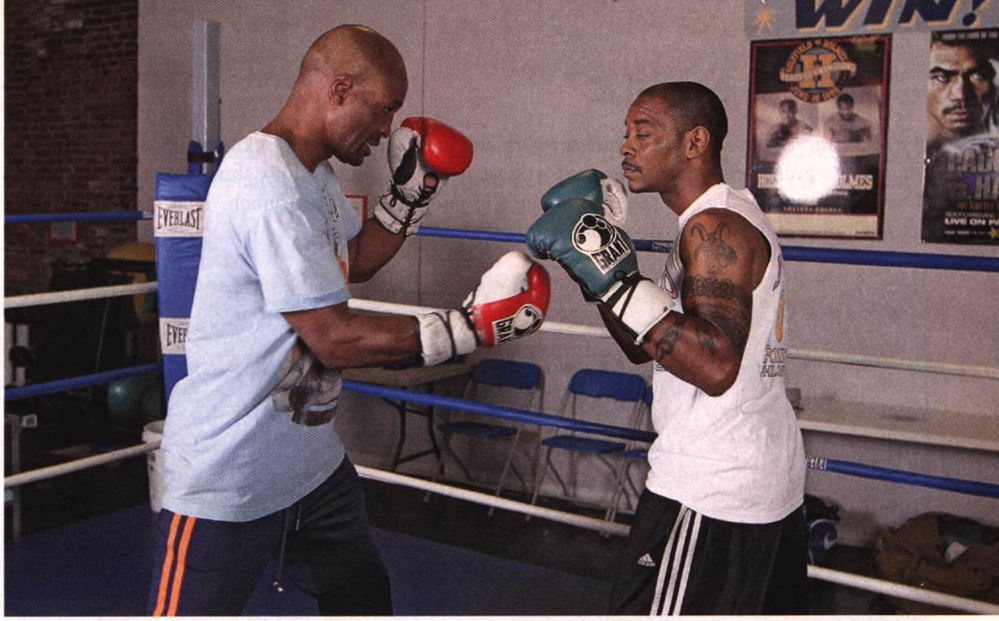


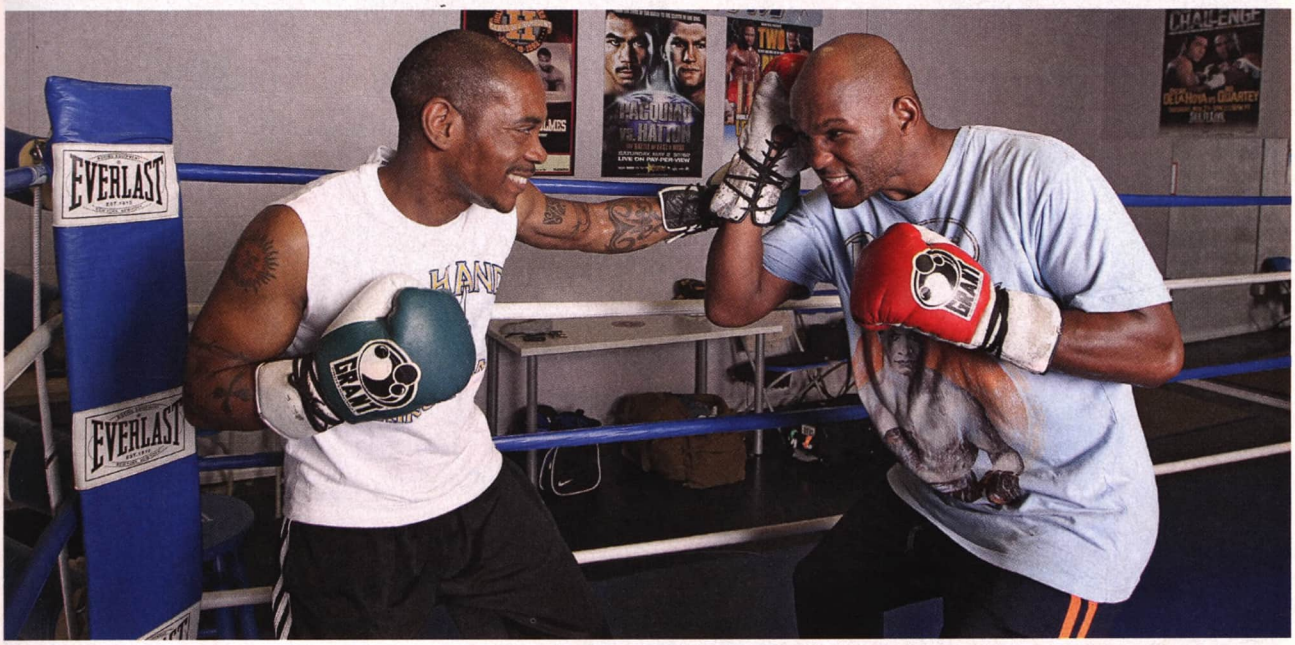
SET THE TRAP FOR THE UPPERCUT

To set up the right uppercut, punch at your opponent's forehead so he comes down into it. If I ain't got you ducking down, I can't throw the uppercut. If I already seen every time I throw the jab you do this, now I'm setting the trap. That's what I mean by thinking about what you're doing in the ring. Throwing this jab is 100 perecnt about landing the uppercut. If I land the jab, I'm mad because I don't want to land the jab. I want to land the uppercut. I'm really just setting the trap.

THE WRONG WAY

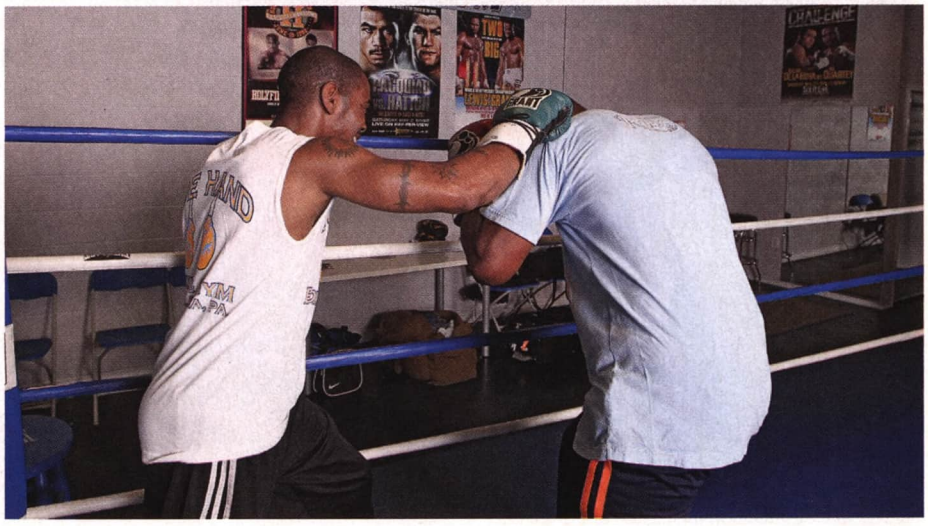
You don't walk in throwing the uppercut like this. He can throw something in a panic and land. You've got to set the trap for the uppercut by making him bend down. That's setting the trap. Even if you land this punch this way, it'll probably be the last time. But when you set the trap and land, sometimes the other guy won't even know why he's getting hit. Sometimes it takes a while to figure out why you keep getting hit by the same punch. He's used to ducking down to get out of the way of a high jab. By the time he figures out he can't do that because of my uppercut, I've landed a lot of punches.





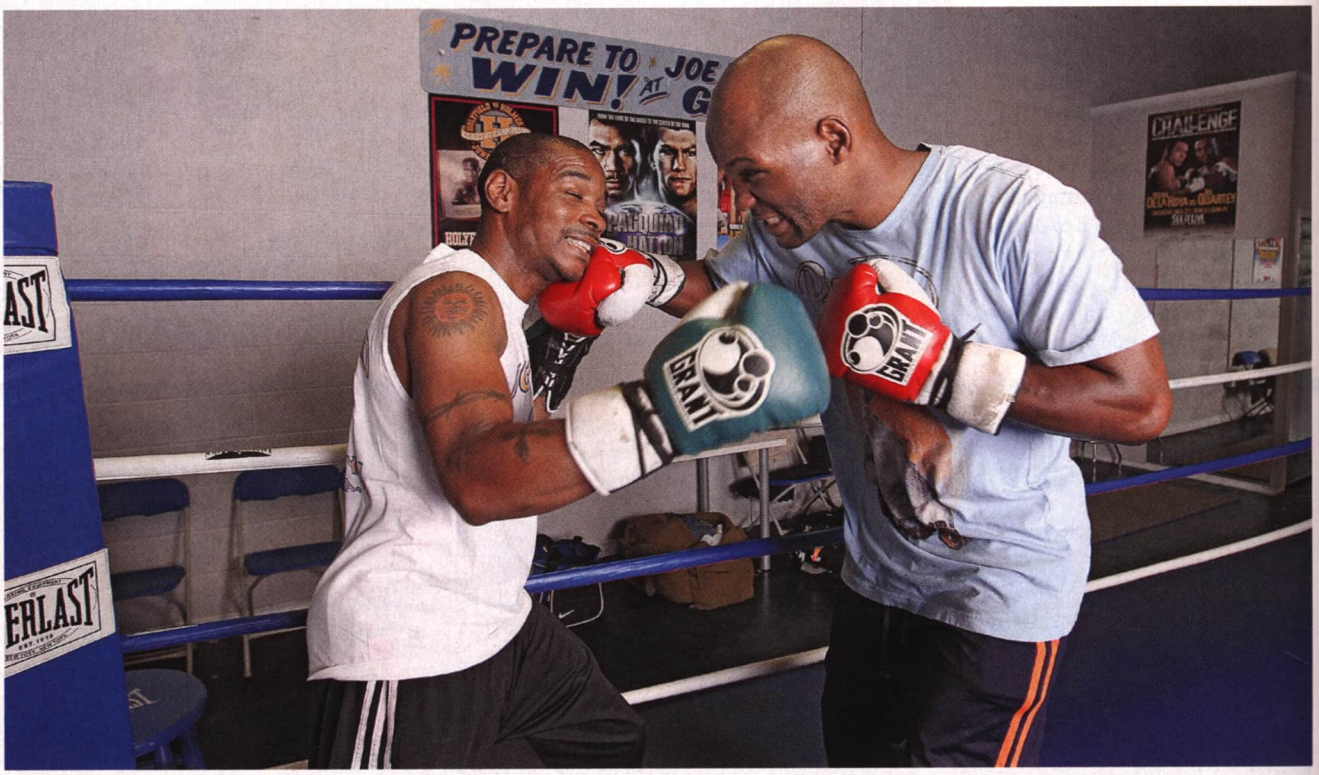
LOCK HIM IN, MAKE HIM PUNCH

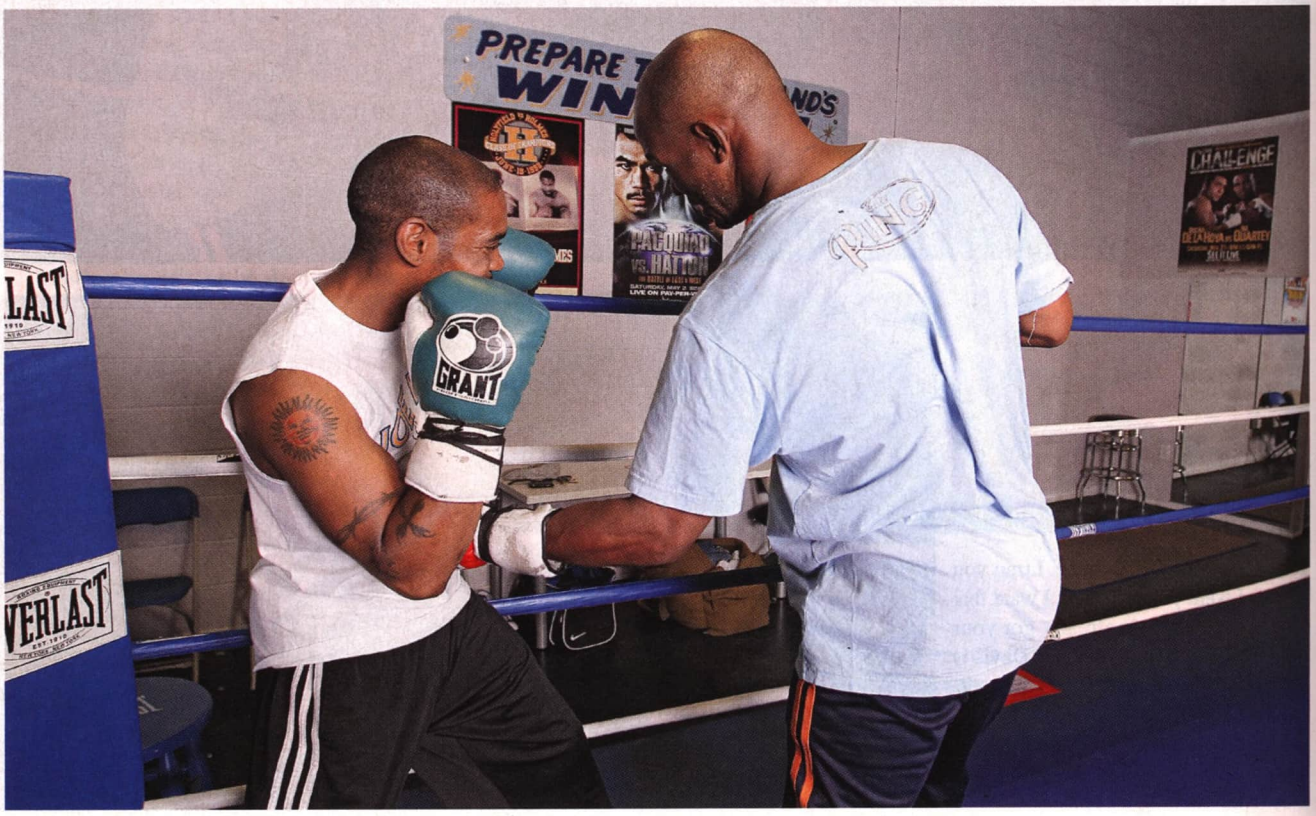
You want to cut the distance. I trap you because I want you to punch. I want that contact because I've already got your punch blocked. I know Danny Davis is going to throw a hook here when I corner him. I already know what you're going to do, and that's why I did it—to set a trap. You're doing what I want you to do. That's setting a trap.



NOW YOU PUNCH

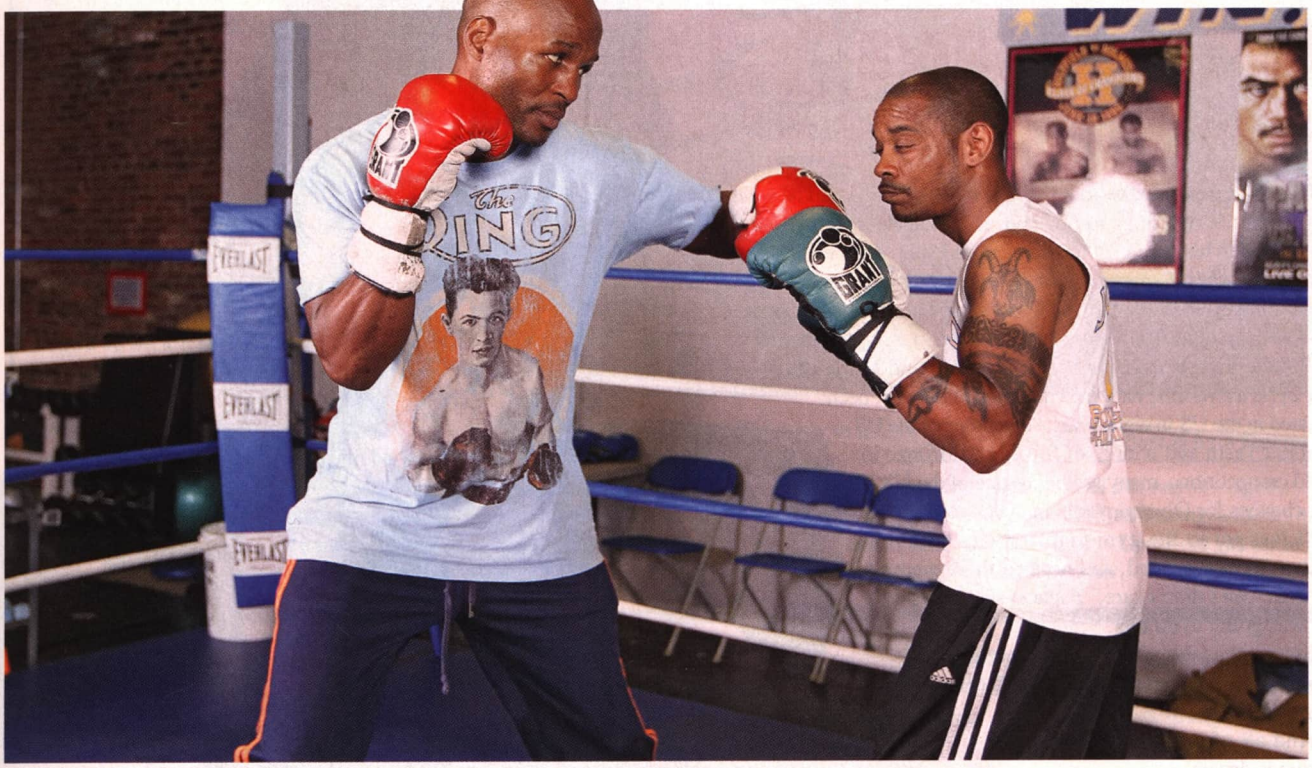
By cornering Danny, I've made him open up and throw punches that I knew he was going to throw, and any time you know what your opponent's going to do before he does, you've got him. I blocked his shots, and then I hit him with a right to the head and a hook to the body, which he doesn't see because he's looking to throw his punch. That stepping to the side, cutting him off, and punching is setting a trap. It makes him do what I want him to do.

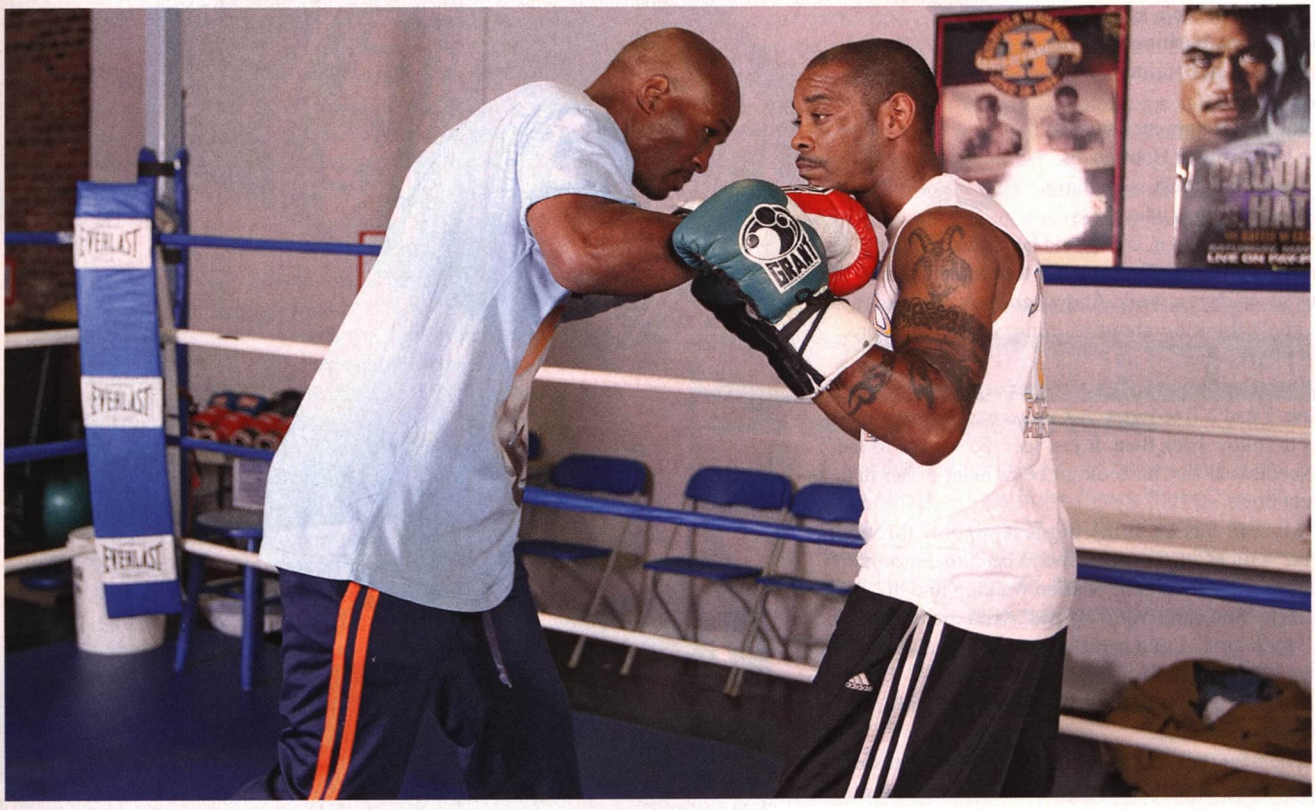




SET THE TRAP FOR THE RIGHT HAND

You set the trap for the right hand by showing the left hook. Again, I'm throwing the hook to fall short; I don't want to land it. If I land it, I'm mad because this is about landing the right hand. The left hook gets me close and puts me in perfect position to land the right. Show the hook; bring the right. Set the trap.





By Michael Rivest

Marlen Esparza
Going For Gold In London

LONDON BOUND
Esparza is determined to add Olympic Gold to her trophy collection

David Esparza used to box when he was young, and he wanted his two boys to box too. His eldest was already at it when his youngest turned nine and was ready for his start. So when Esparza asked 11-year-old Marlen to walk her little brother to the Elite Boxing Club in Houston's tough Eastside, she was only supposed to *support* the tradition, not redefine it.

But the boys soon hung up their gloves, and Marlen Esparza, now 21, is a five-time national champion and hasn't been defeated in the US in eight years. A member of the US National Team and winner of Silver and Bronze in world competitions, many see her as one of the US's best chances for Olympic Gold in 2012.

"I just got to the gym that first day with my brother, looked around, and noticed there weren't any girls. But I didn't care," Esparza said. "I decided I was going to do this."

Since then, she's been utterly relentless. "Boxing is like a new life," she said. "It wants all of you."

And all of her is what it gets. Marlen is driven.

"It's like there's something inside of her, pushing her forward," said her trainer, Rudy Silva.

Not even her pre-med studies at the University of Houston distract her. That's just something she does; boxing is who she is.

"She's all about it, 24/7," said her father. "Other than taking a day off after a big tournament, she trains seven days a week. And when she's not training, she's thinking about training, or her diet, or ways to get better.

"It was hard for me to accept her as a woman boxer at first. I had a fixed idea and there were no other patterns to follow back then. It just seemed strange to me."

Needless to say, he couldn't be prouder of her than he is right now.

"My dad has been my biggest support throughout my career," said Marlen. "He's always been there for me."

Silva remembers little Marlen walking into his gym that first day. "She came right up and asked me to train her. 'I don't train girls,' I told her. But instead of walking out, she started punching a bag."

If you're not yet thinking of a certain Clint Eastwood movie, keep reading.

"The next day, she not only comes back, but she asks me again, and I said 'no' again." But Silva didn't need to

RUDY SILVA: CHANGING LIVES

From the looks of it, Houston's Elite Boxing Gym is like a lot of others, just a former warehouse put to different use. But inside, to the soundtrack of cars and trucks flying down nearby Interstate 10, young lives are changing for the better.

Rudy Silva knows something about that. He's been the head trainer there since the gym opened in 2001. Silva is a police officer with the Houston PD. "I asked to work in Jefferson Davis High School. It's in a gang infested area," he said.

"Lots of the kids who come to this gym have nowhere else to go," he continued. "Boxing gives them a higher purpose, something to strive for. I love what I do."

Like most coaches, Silva came to boxing early, winning 45 amateur fights and four-back-to-back regional Golden Gloves titles before changing life directions. When he was 19, he went to college and turned away from boxing, suddenly and completely.

"I had a full-throttle coach, and I just got burned out," he said. "And you know how it is in boxing. You're either all the way in or all the way out. I didn't even watch it on TV. Then a kid asked me to train him and, before you know it, I had six kids. In that first year, five of them won the regional Golden Gloves."

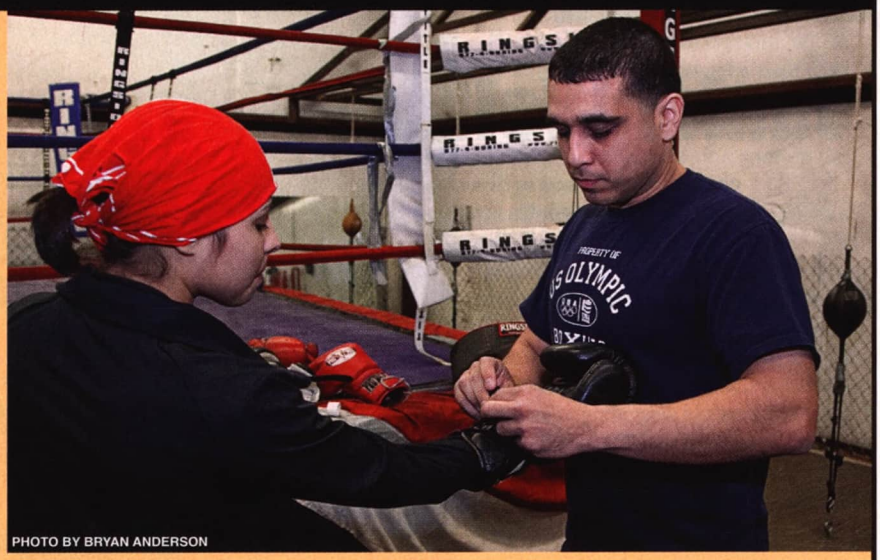


PHOTO BY BRYAN ANDERSON

LACE 'EM UP
At first, Silva was reluctant to train Esparza

Silva was back, all the way in—again.

So he opened Elite Boxing, and, on it's first business day, an 11-year-old girl came in with her little brother.

be persuaded by Morgan Freeman. "This time I watched her work the bag and saw something. She just looked, I don't know, different, the way she moved. I told her I'd train her but only if I could train her like a man, because I still didn't train girls."

Pass the popcorn.

"Turns out, she has more drive than any boxer I've ever worked with," said Silva. "It just comes from inside of her somewhere."

It wasn't long before the awards started coming, and not Academy Awards, but real life boxing ones. Within a year, she won her first regional Golden Gloves championship, then another, then more after that, until the national and world tournaments started happening.

"She's totally focused," said Christina Cruz, one of the best women boxers in the nation.

But here's where a conversation with Esparza gets deep. She must be very proud of her accomplishments, right?

"Well, yes," said the small uncertain voice. After persistent questioning over the course of a few days, came the following, almost reluctant admission: "If I win a national tournament and, back in the gym, a guy wins a state championship, I feel like it's the same."

You mean you feel that it's *perceived* the same by others? "Uh… no, *I* feel like it's the same. My dad's always mad at me for not taking care of my medals. They mean a lot, just not that much, not yet anyway."

There seems to be a script on Esparza's heart, written in the ink of tradition, that says: "Not as good as a man." But unlike the countless other young women who walked into a boxing gym, looked around and saw only men, then walked out again, Esparza entered Elite Boxing and went to the other extreme. She caught fire.

What will rewrite the script? "The gold in London," came her answer. No reluctance this time, just a reaction as fast as a right-hand counter over a lazy jab.

Shortly after the good news arrived that the 2012 London Games would, for the first time, include women, came the sobering follow-up: Only three weight divisions could play: 112, 132, and 165-pounds. Since Esparza's entire career had been spent at 106, she would have to come up, something boxers never like to do. It sacrifices strength and power.

"It also means fighting people who'll be coming down from 119," said Silva.

"I didn't care," said Esparza. "My strength is my speed."

So far, she's right. Esparza defeated Cruz at the 2010 US Nationals and then upset reigning world champion Kim Ok Hyang from South Korea at the 2010 Women's World Championships in Barbados. Only a heartbreaking two-point loss to Thailand's Peamwilai Laopeam stopped her quest for gold.

No worries. Esparza was back in the gym shortly after getting off the plane in Houston. There was training to do, and that new script to work on. ■

Michael Rivest can be contacted at mrivest2@gmail.com.

Women's International Dual Series

Oxnard, California, November 16-20, 2010

112-pounds: Cynthia Moreno, Phoenix, AZ, dec. Yasmina Musa, Spain
132-pounds: Debbie Richards, Canada, dec. Mikaela Mayer, Crest Hill, CA
165-pounds: Lisbet Vargas, Portland, OR, dec. Tamara Fabiana, Spain
112-pounds: Tyrieshia Douglas, Baltimore, MD, dec. Vivien Mizsei, Hungary
132-pounds: Stephanie Han, El Paso, TX, dec. Pikacs Mercedesz, Hungary
165-pounds: Maria Kovacs, Hungary, won on medical walk over, Kalita Marsh, Smithfield, NC
112-pounds: Alex Love, Monroe, WA, dec. Karolina Michalczuk, Poland
132-pounds: Queen Underwood, Seattle, WA, won on medical walk over, Karolina Graczyk, Poland
165-pounds: Lidia Fidura, Poland, dec. Alyssa DeFazio, Phoenix, AZ

by Don Stewart

Junior Welterweight Tim Coleman

Muhammad Ali turned to boxing after someone stole his bike. Mike Tyson got his introduction while serving time in reform school. Paul Williams' career started with a fight on a school bus.

For junior welterweight Tim Coleman, the catalyst was cable television.

"I watched *Rocky I*, *II*, and *III* on TNT one weekend," said the Baltimore, Maryland, native. "Then I told my dad I wanted to box."

A 14-year old struggling to stay out of trouble, Coleman looked around but failed to find a suitable gym in his area, so he decided to join his father in Las Vegas, Nevada. An out of work electrician, Tim Coleman Sr. had recently moved to Vegas hoping to find work. What he did find was the Richard Steele Gym, which became the younger Coleman's training spot.

It was some introduction. Future champs and titleholders such as Floyd Mayweather, Zab Judah, Steve Forbes, and Paul Spadafora were appearing at Steele's gym. Tim Jr. was soon being trained by Floyd Mayweather Sr. and Roger Mayweather, among many others.

"To be completely honest with you, I was a screw up as a kid, even with boxing in my life," Coleman said. "But boxing kept me at an acceptable level. Boxing was a bigger call to me than the streets ever were. I was really addicted to it as a kid. It's all I wanted to do. I'd skip school to go watch the pros train."

Those early days formed the foundation of a confidence that's proved unshakable, even through nearly six frustrating years as a pro. Now 26, Coleman finally appears to be on the verge of breaking into contender status.

Coleman, 18-1-1 (5), scored his best win to date in October: a three-round destruction of southpaw fringe contender Patrick Lopez on *ShoBox*. Typically a flashy boxer, "Pit Bull" opted to slug it out with Lopez, 20-3 (12), a two-time Venezuelan Olympian. The result was an entertaining scrap that ended abruptly in the third round when Coleman countered a Lopez left with a perfectly timed right uppercut that sent Lopez face-first into the floor.

"I feel like I'm really coming into my own," said Coleman, whose confidence has been bolstered by sparring sessions with a who's who list that includes Mayweather, Oscar De La Hoya, Diego Corrales, and Joan Guzman. "I never went to a camp with anybody and just got blasted out," he said. "That's why I feel like I can be a champion at my weight one day. I've been in with the best."

"People are starting to notice him now," said Camero Mercer, Coleman's manager since his third pro bout and one of the few points of stability in his career. "I think he's one or two fights away from people recognizing how much talent he has. I think now is Tim's time."

Coleman, who is nothing if not honest, said he envisioned himself with a lot more money by this point in his career. Instead, Coleman has spent much of the last six years struggling for fights and attention.

He's averaged a little more than three per year, a number boosted by a nine-bout 2007. Coleman said Mercer is constantly on the phone trying to land opponents, and Coleman himself frequently visits MakeAFight.com in an effort to, well, make a fight. As a result, his dance partners have included several tough club-level fighters with deceivingly lousy records.

PRO RECORD

2005		
June 3	Kevin Carmody, Aston, PA	W 4
June 16	Diego Villalba, Glen Burnie, MD	W 4
Sept. 17	Spencer Harsley, Fairfax, VA	KO 3
2006		
April 7	Marquis McConnell, Philadelphia, PA	W 4
June 15	Mushin Corbbrey, Glen Burnie	W 6
Nov. 9	John Campbell, Glen Burnie	KO 1
2007		
Jan. 27	Jason Champion, Pikesville, MD	W 6
Feb. 17	Julio Cesar Lanzas, Suitland, MD	W 6
Mar. 30	John Lipscomb, Phoenixville, PA	W 4
May 18	Carlos Arnoldo Cisneros, Ft. Washington, PA	W 6
June 22	Carlos Pena, Baltimore, MD	W 6
Aug. 25	Richard Hall, Ocean City, MD	W 8
Oct. 12	Doel Carrasquillo, Baltimore	W 8
Nov. 1	Scott Ball, Hunt Valley, MD	KO 1
Dec. 7	Martinus Clay, Pikesville	D 10
2008		
Oct. 3	James De La Rosa, Salisbury, MD	L 10
2009		
April 10	Carlos Arnoldo Cisneros, Baltimore	KO 3
July 25	Martinus Clay, Baltimore	W 8
Dec. 3	Mike Arnaoutis, New York, NY	W 12
2010		
Oct. 1	Patrick Lopez, Santa Ynez, CA	KO 3

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
20	18	1	1	5

"If I would have had some of those dead men walking, all my fights would have ended in knockouts," said Coleman, who feels his power is increasing with age. "I've had to work for it. I have to scrap for everything I get in this boxing game. It hasn't been a dream come true for me. I'm doing what I love to do, and I'm happy. But it's hard for me. I'm gonna keep chasing my dream."

Instability hasn't helped. Asked how many trainers he's had as a pro, the blunt Coleman answered: "Too f___ing many." It's actually been five. The Lopez bout was Coleman's first as a pro under Roger Mayweather, whom Coleman and Mercer credited with the aggressive fight plan that led to the quick kayo. It was also Coleman's first outing since cutting ties with Star Boxing and landing optional contracts with Gary Shaw Productions and Thompson Boxing Promotions.

Despite his colorful personality, Coleman isn't exactly a marketing guru's dream assignment. In a country with attention-deficit disorder, it's not easy to sell a guy with just five knockouts in 20 fights. African-American fighters are assumed to be

PHOTO BY DWIGHT MCCANN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

far less marketable than their Hispanic counterparts. And while Coleman had somewhere near 200 amateur fights, he never took the unpaid ranks seriously enough to score a national title or a spot on the Olympic team.

Coleman doesn't have a perfect record either, thanks to a draw with journeyman Martinus Clay in December 2007, during which Coleman broke his hand early, and a close-but-unanimous 10-round points loss to unbeaten James De La Rosa at 147 pounds in October '08. Coleman avenged the Clay draw with a one-sided decision in their July '09 rematch but has yet to get another crack at De La Rosa.

Coleman feels he ditched his game plan and fought De La Rosa's fight by slugging instead of boxing, especially late. The scores still were 96-94 across the board, and the ring announcer initially called out Coleman's first name before abruptly realizing his mistake and declaring De La Rosa the winner.

"It wasn't like I wasn't in the fight; that kid couldn't box," Coleman said. "I'll put that out there because I want to fight his ass again. I took that fight on 25-days' notice and almost beat the f___er."

After the setback, the 5'6'' Coleman dropped down to the loaded 140-pound division, where he's won four straight and regained any lost momentum. Before stopping Lopez, he captured a controversial split decision against former contender Mike Arnaoutis last December in a Versus-televised bout. Coleman feels the commentators and the mostly pro-Arnaoutis crowd at the Manhattan Center Grand Ballroom in New York made the fight look closer than it actually was.

"It doesn't matter how you beat the other guy. At the end of the day, it just matters how you won," Coleman said.

It's a fitting mentality for a scrapper who was initially drawn to the sport by *Rocky* movies. Maybe there's been a few more plot twists than Coleman first envisioned, but he still feels there will be a Hollywood ending to his story. ■

Some Things Don't Add Up

On October 16, in Hamburg, Germany, 39-year-old Shannon Briggs took a terrible beating from Vitali Klitschko in the process of losing a 12-round unanimous decision by scores of 120-105 and 120-107 (twice). Three things regarding the WBC heavyweight title fight and Briggs' subsequent hospitalization do not make sense.

Issue One: Why was this fight sanctioned? Briggs is currently not rated by any of the major organizations. Since his 2007 loss to Sultan Ibragimov, none of the boxers he has fought, save Klitschko, were rated in the top 15. Moreover, Briggs' 2009 knockout of Marcus McKee was changed to a no-contest when Briggs tested positive for an illegal substance.

Issue Two: An upset appeared impossible after round six, but at no point did referee Ian John-Lewis, the ring physician, or Briggs' lead trainer, Herman Caicedo, stop the barrage of punishment by pulling Briggs out of the fight.

Issue Three: If all Briggs injured was his left biceps tendon, why was he in the hospital for so many days before undergoing surgery?

As this is a medical column, I will leave the debate of the first issue to others. In my mind, however, neither the WBC nor the German commission should have approved the fight. This alone would have saved Briggs needless injury and brain cells.

Regarding the second issue, stopping a one-sided bout where the boxer is alert and willing to continue is difficult. It becomes an even greater challenge when it is for a heavyweight title.

Briggs said he tore his left biceps tendon in the first round. In my experience, a one-armed fighter can continue if he is able to protect himself and stay out of harm's way—if the referee and ring physician determine there is no nerve damage or compromise of blood flow. A ring physician never visited Briggs between rounds.

One of the main reasons cornermen, physicians, and a referee are present is to make the right decision when needed, even if that means stopping a fight no matter what the wishes are of the boxer. It is the brain trauma we can't see that contributes to disabling cognitive issues in boxers.

There was no justification for allowing the bout to continue, and all involved should have been called forward to discuss their actions

MISMATCH
Briggs took an inordinate amount of punishment

PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

NO MERCY
Why didn't Briggs' corner stop the one-sided beating?

PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

so that the next match they work will not end in an even more serious result.

Regarding the third issue, Briggs' promoter, Greg Cohen of Empire Sports and Entertainment, told ESPN.com journalist Dan Rafael, "He [Briggs] was banged up pretty bad. The CT scan came back normal, thank God. His biceps is a very serious injury, and they have to do surgery. He was in intensive care after the fight for precautionary reasons. The injuries are not life-threatening."

Cohen also dispelled the rumor that Briggs collapsed in the dressing room. He told ESPN.com, "He walked out of the arena on his own."

During his October 20 hospital-based press conference, Briggs denied any medical problem except the torn biceps tendon. Yet, he said he would remain hospitalized until his tendon was repaired. Hospitalized for a tendon tear?

The tendon tear was obvious. It was easy to see Brigg's left biceps muscle balled up in his arm (above the elbow) right after the fight.

The biceps muscle extends from the shoulder to the top of the elbow on the front of the upper arm. The biceps tendon is the structure than connects the biceps muscle to the bone. It has two portions: a tendon that attaches the muscle at the shoulder joint and one that connects the muscle at the elbow. A tendon is made up of strands of collagen lined up close to one another. They have a high tensile strength and can withstand significant force on both ends.

A biceps tendon rupture occurs when the tendon separates from the bone. When the injury occurs around the elbow joint, it is typically the result of heavy lifting or a sports related activity while delivering great force. The tear makes a popping sound in front of the elbow. There may be no pop in a partial tear. In a full or partial tear, the front of the elbow is painful, and the arm may feel weak while flexing the biceps or rotating the forearm while throwing a punch.

Treatment is surgery, as non-surgical methods results in arm fatigue, weakness, and deformity. Most importantly, surgery should be done quickly to avoid tendon retraction (tendons tightening up).

According to respected Las Vegas orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Steven Sanders, "You would like to get it fixed soon after diagnosis—at least within two weeks. The longer you delay, the biceps muscle migrates up the arm, and there is more scarring and less elasticity."

The quicker the tendon tear is repaired, the quicker the fighter can resume activity. Sanders estimated an approximate three-month rest period before allowing Briggs to throw a punch or jab. At one time, the arm would remain immobilized. However, improved techniques allow the arm to be splinted for a shorter time period and the patient to begin mild range of motion activity within the first week.

The fact that Hamburg's Eppendorf University Hospital waited a week to repair Briggs' torn biceps tendon is highly unusual—especially with time being of the essence. Commonly, these procedures are done on an outpatient basis—no need for hospitalization before or afterwards. Yet, Briggs had to remain as an inpatient. And, why was he in ICU?

"There is no indication to admit someone for biceps tendon repair," said Sanders, who has treated countless fighters. "It is an outpatient procedure. I worked at Germany's Essen Hospital a number of years ago. Germany has very sophisticated medical care."

The Hamburg hospital has an excellent reputation. For them to have kept Briggs as an inpatient means they believed he sustained sufficient head trauma and needed to be observed several days before undergoing a general anesthetic to repair his tendon.

It is wonderful that Briggs is recovering, but to publicly minimize the punishment he took to his head is not only wrong for his future, but for all fighters—both amateur and professional. It also sends the wrong message to trainers, ring physicians, and referees that it is somehow okay to allow a boxer to take this much punishment with no repercussions.

Irrespective of whether or not I am correct as to why Briggs remained hospitalized, the bottom line is that even though a boxer has two biceps tendons, he has only one brain. If his poor showing against Klitschko related more to his arm injury than lack of skill that night, it doesn't change the bottom line: A fight should not continue round after round if a boxer is seriously losing, irrespective of whether or not they are on their feet when the final bell rings. ■

HITTING ON THE BREAK

by Jim Bagg

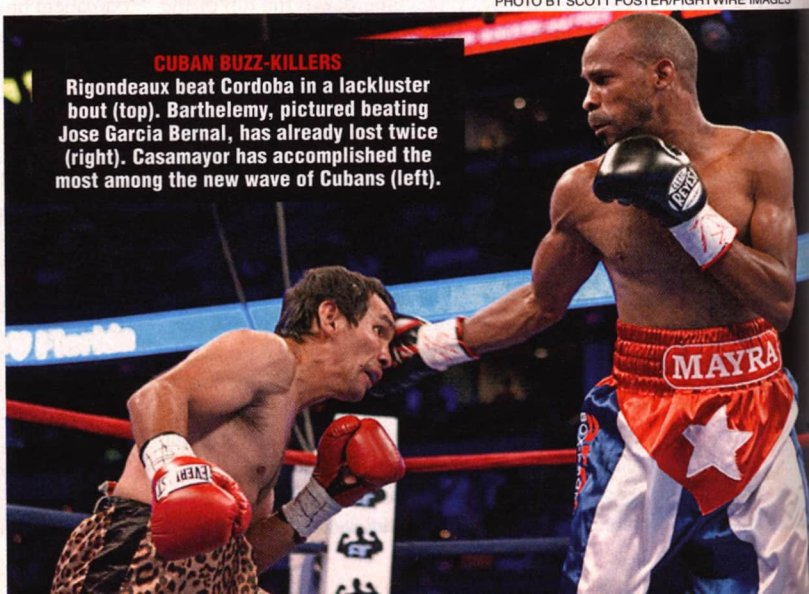
PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BT SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

CUBAN BUZZ-KILLERS

Rigondeaux beat Cordoba in a lackluster bout (top). Barthelemy, pictured beating Jose Garcia Bernal, has already lost twice (right). Casamayor has accomplished the most among the new wave of Cubans (left).



Cuban Zirconium

It's typically frowned upon in our overly sensitive society to lump all members of a certain race, religion, or nationality together and make a sweeping generalization about them. Luckily for you, the Baggapalooza doesn't much care who's frowning at him. So he'll come right out and say it: The Cubans are the most overrated, overhyped boxers on the planet.

If that statement leads to another missile crisis, so be it. If it's going to get Gloria Estefan or Bob Vila all pissed off, no skin off the Baggmeister's nose. It is what it is. The Cubans may be the dominant force in amateur boxing, but, when it comes to the pros, they almost always come up short. Here's an analogy for you: Ted Danson has had, and continues to have, a legendary TV career, but he's been a complete bomb on the big screen. Skills don't always translate. So it's time to stop shoving these Cuban amateur boxers down our throats. They should all just marry Mary Steenburgen and stick with what they do best.

If you saw Guillermo Rigondeaux's fight against Ricardo Cordoba on the Manny Pacquiao-Antonio Margarito pay-per-view undercard, then you know why the Baggpunzel has chosen this moment to write about the subject of overrated Cubans. Rigondeaux was supposedly the best amateur boxer ever. HBO's Jim Lampley even said during the broadcast, "Rigondeaux was to amateur boxing what Jim Bagg is to boxing writing." (Okay, Lamps didn't really say that. But he wanted to, then thought better of it because there's too much room for debate about the first half of the statement.)

Anyway, against Cordoba, Rigondeaux lived up to the hype in a certain sense: As a professional, he looked like a great amateur. He looked like a guy who was used to dominating with his speed and technique over three or four rounds then enjoying the luxury of the fight being over before stronger, slower guys could start to have their way with him. And this is what we've seen from quite a few stand-out Cuban amateurs when they turned pro: They're great four-round fighters, then they fade quickly. Call it "The Diobelys Hurtado Corollary."

Before we go any further, the Baggnificence ought to specify that he's referring to *modern* Cuban boxers, the ones who had to defect and free themselves from Fidel Castro's grip. So don't go sending angry e-mails telling the Baggmeister he overlooked Kid Gavilan or Kid Chocolate or Kid Paret or Kid 'N Play. There have been some all-time great professional boxers from Cuba. But when it comes to the current wave, or the wave that preceded it—or really, anything since the great Teofilo Stevenson tease of the '70s—the Cubans have been a hooker in a chastity belt. They get you all worked up, but … well, you don't need the Bagglaration to spell it out for you.

So far, for all the hype about how great these guys were going to be in the pro ranks, we've seen one exception to the rule of disappointment: Joel Casamayor. And even Casamayor never climbed into the pound-for-pound top 10. He had a very good pro career, but Ed Brophy over at the International Boxing Hall of Fame isn't exactly putting him on speed dial. (Actually, does anybody put anybody on speed dial anymore? Maybe it's time to send that cliché to the cliché graveyard along with "VCR alert!" and all references to Rolodexes.)

The rest of the defectors from the 1990s, many of whom were part of "Team Freedom" with Casamayor, either didn't know what to do after four rounds or just didn't know what to do with their freedom and ate/partied their way out of a boxing career. Ramon Garbey, for example, followed the Jim Bagg fitness plan to the letter, and that's why he lost to nobodies like Napoleon Tagoe and Kendrick Releford and ended his career about 40 pounds heavier than he started it. Remember the Castillo brothers, Eliecer and Eliseo? Of course you don't. How about the name Mario Iribarren? And you probably do remember Jorge Luis Gonzalez, but not in a good way. He had the mullet to end all mullets (party in the back, Mr. Clean in the front) and that mullet could usually be found soaking up whatever fluids had been spilled on the ring canvas.

On the other hand, Hurtado and Juan Carlos Gomez were good, solid pros. Here's the problem, though: Can you name any of their memorable wins? Or when you think of them, do you only think of the fights they lost (invariably by knockout)?

And that brings us to the present day, where we find a whole new crew of Cuban amateur stars getting everyone worked up into a sweaty lather. You have Rigondeaux, Yuriorkis Gamboa, Erislandy Lara, Odlanier Solis, Yudel Jhonson, Yordanis Despaigne, and Yan Barthelemy. Let's start pointing out their flaws, shall we?

Rigondeaux: His coming-out party against Cordoba got him booed out of

AND THE STINGRAY GOES TO …

Gilberto Keb Baas, who, if the Baggmatician's crack research team is correct, just became the only man to win an alphabet title and a Stingray at the same time. (And if you're a devotee of this magazine and this column, you know which one is harder to win and more valuable as a result.)

Keb Baas brought a Pendletonian record of 33-20-4 (21) into his bout against beltholder Omar Nino, who came in at 30-3-2 (12), and what looked on paper like an easy optional defense against a guy who'd failed in previous title tries against Pongsaklek Wonjongkam and Eric Morel turned out to be difficult for Nino right from the start. Keb Baas dropped him in round one, then did it again in round eight, and ended up capturing a 12-round majority decision. (Side note: Remember the name Miguel Angel Moron, errr, um, Moran, who somehow scored the bout even while the other two judges correctly had the underdog winning comfortably.)

So now Keb-Baas, after 15 years and 20 losses as a pro, has an alphabet belt. More importantly, he has a Stingray Award. And for the latter, he doesn't even have to pay sanctioning fees. (Which isn't to say he isn't allowed to drop a c-note or two in the mail for the Baggburger if he so desires. There's a thin line between extortion and accepting bribes, and, with the Bagganannny's credit-card debt such as it is, he's happy to walk that line.)

Cowboys Stadium faster than Joe Theismann defecating on the star in the middle of the field. **Gamboa:** His kitchen cabinets contain a chin made of china and a silver platter on which he presents it to opponents. **Lara:** He's a pretty good fighter actually, but he's a boring southpaw, so good luck getting any big-name stars to accept his challenge or any fans to pay to see him. **Solis:** All you need to know is that he's 6'1", 270 pounds (or at least he was when the Baggalini started typing that sentence; he could be 275 by the end of the sentence). **Jhonson:** His last opponent was 8-43-2, and to make matters worse, his parents are obviously dyslexic. **Despaigne:** He lost to an American at the 2004 Olympics, for crying out loud! **Barthelemy:** He's already been beaten twice in his first 13 pro

THE MONTHLY MAILBAGG

Before we get to the Mailbagg, an important rhetorical question to ask: Is there any better way for a woman scorned to get revenge on her cheating ex-husband than to shack up with the Baggalooski? Just wanted to make sure Eva Longoria was aware of what her number-one option is for evening the score with Tony Parker. Now, on to some reader mail:

FACE FLATTENER Some wonder how Margarito stayed upright

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Dear Dirk Baggler,

I just watched the Pacquiao-Margarito fight and wondered if you feel as I do that Manny could've ended Margarito with a Hatton-type knockout but decided to prolong the punishment because of Margarito and Brandon Rios clowning his father figure Freddie Roach. Your thoughts, please.

Also, after seeing Fernando Vargas in the ring with Margarito, it made me wonder what ever happened to the '96 Olympic team. Could you possibly give us readers a where-are-they-now of these fighters?

Regards,
Aaron M. Ramirez

Aaron,

It's an interesting theory on the Pacquiao-Margarito fight, but it's off base. If Pacquiao wanted to punish "The Plastered Bastard," why did he ease up in the 12th round? Pac-Man doesn't make fights personal. If he could have finished Margarito early, he would have, but Margarito is a natural junior middleweight with a good chin, so he wasn't as easy to erase as Hatton.

As for the '96 Olympic team, do you really expect the Baggtastic to find room to provide updates on 12 different fighters in his little sidebar mailbagg? Here's one update for you: Floyd Mayweather, according to his right-hand man Leonard Ellerbe, was never on the '96 team. He definitely did not fight in Atlanta, did not win a bronze medal, and has no idea what the Olympics are.

fights, meaning he's the first of the new Cubans we can officially cross off the list.

The rest will fall, one by one. Guys like Rigondeaux and Gamboa might have decent careers, but the hype machine has practically placed them on the pound-for-pound list before their careers are 10 fights old, which hasn't happened since a decade ago when some media members lost their minds over Panchito Bojado. And we all know how that turned out. The reality is that these guys have skill, they have talent, they'll excite us for a few rounds at a time, and then they'll either get knocked out or turn into absolute stinkers.

To put it simply, all these defectors come with defects. Rigondeaux lasted exactly seven pro fights before we saw his.

PHOTO BY MARY ANN OWEN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

GREEN BEANED

In case you haven't heard, Allan Green is protesting his knockout loss to Glen Johnson. Clearly, Johnson KO 8 Green has to win Knockout of the Year, right? Johnson hit the man so hard he made him completely forget that punching the other guy in the head with your gloved fist is allowed in boxing. You don't see a knockout that concussive every day.

Three-Finger Salute

The Veteran's Day boxing telecast on ESPN2 was billed as "A Salute To America's Heroes," but what it actually turned out to be was a salute to ESPN2's regular broadcasters, as without Brian Kenny or Joe Tessitore, the show turned into a worse disaster than The Baggarooney's second marriage.

Claudia Trejos filled in for Tessitore, and let's just say she put the "blow" in blow-by-blow. She was as smooth on the microphone as Discombobulating Jones, she had the boxing knowledge of your average *Sports Illustrated* editor, and she looked frighteningly similar to Robert Guerrero from the neck up. Speaking of frightening, did you catch Teddy Atlas' bizarre pep-rally speech to the troops at the top of the show in which he tried to integrate a strategic preview of the main event? And it didn't get any better for Teddy from there, as he spent the next two hours trying to lug around Trejos' dead weight. Add in ESPN.com's Dan Rafael reading the boxing news off cue cards apparently under strict orders not to use any vocal inflection (at least he didn't say, "It makes me smeel mainly" at any point), and you had a boxing broadcast that simply didn't work on any level.

It's time for a new rule at ESPN: If Kenny and Tessitore aren't available, just cancel the show. America's heroes will understand. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

Friday Night Fights Is Back!

When ESPN began cutting back on its boxing coverage in the last decade, many of us wondered if that was a sign of where boxing stood with America's premiere sports network. But according to *Friday Night Fights* programming director **Doug Loughery**, the boxing budget woes are old news.

The budget for *FNF* has "steadily increased," Loughery told THE RING. "We're viable and efficient. People should be positive, whether they are viewers tuning in or promoters putting their fighters on our network. We're balancing a lot of acts and locations, and we have more strong outlets for boxing in ESPN Deportes and ESPN3. The money we have is the money we have; we can deliver a good product."

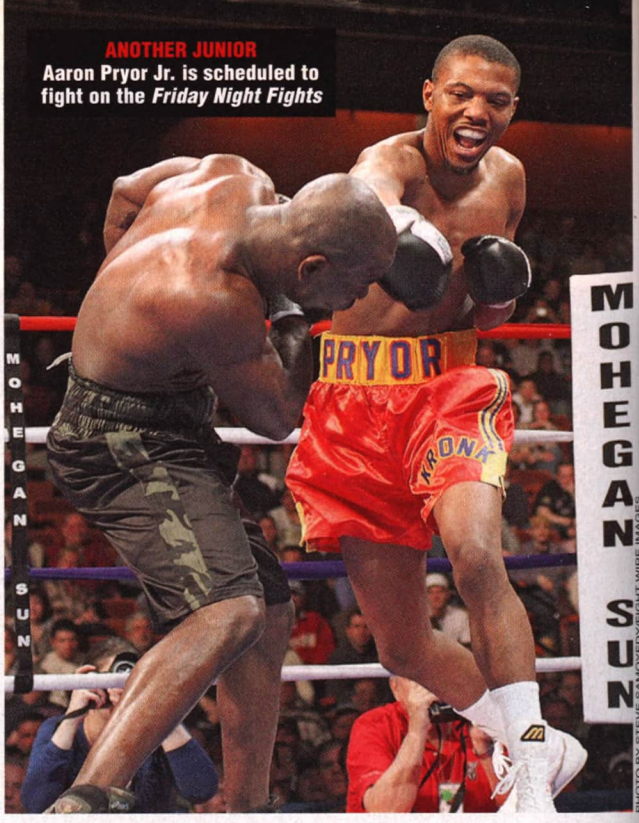
FNF certainly seems ready to kick off the new year. The season premiere on January 7, 2011, comes from Las Vegas and features undefeated Russian junior welterweight **Ruslan Provodnikov** versus **Mauricio Herrera**. The 26-year-old Provodnikov has already scored stoppage wins over veterans **Javier Jauregui** and **Emanuel Augustus**, while Herrera has lost only once in 16 bouts. The following weeks on *FNF* will feature such familiar faces as **Peter Manfredo Jr.** and **Cristobal Arreola**.

"Another name we're excited about is **Aaron Pryor Jr.**," said Loughery. Pryor, the son of a famous fighting father, fights undefeated **Edwin Rodriguez** on January 14th, live from Key West. At 32, Junior Pryor hasn't exactly set the world on fire since turning pro in 2005, but he's a 6'4" super middleweight who was a Cincinnati Golden Gloves winner in 2003. While fighting for money, he's stopped 11 of 17 opponents, losing twice by decision. Meanwhile, Rodriguez is coming off an impressive kayo of **James McGirt**.

But even if *FNF* is ready to roar into 2011, it still faces challenges, namely in finding affordable fighters who aren't stuck on keeping their undefeated records and haven't been convinced by promoters that they should be fighting on HBO for millions of dollars. Unfortunately, that's too often the case.

Older boxing fans remember when young fighters seemed to grow up before our eyes on ESPN. Times have changed, though, and it's becoming rare to see a fighter on *FNF* more than a time or two. In recent times, fighters who seemed good candidates for regular work on ESPN2 spent most of their formative years on the Spanish networks, while Showtime's *ShoBox* series gobbled up a lot of young talent too. Fighters also seem to have itchy feet these days.

"Fighters move on quickly now," said Loughery. "**Yuriorkis Gamboa** was a guy who appeared on *Friday Night Fights* a few times and then moved on. We knew with his long amateur career, he wasn't going to spend a lot of time with us. Now, we're looking at a guy like Ruslan [Provodnikov]. He's a talent we'll develop, and then he'll move along."



ANOTHER JUNIOR
Aaron Pryor Jr. is scheduled to fight on the *Friday Night Fights*

And once a fighter makes it to HBO or Showtime, it seems unlikely that he'll return to ESPN. The days of someone like **Zab Judah** or **Glen Johnson** taking a tune-up on *FNF* may not be over, but are certainly on the wane. "It's financial, more than anything," said Loughery.

As important as nailing down fighters for 2011 is ESPN2's effort to nail down venues and time slots.

"We'll shoot for venues that will be full, even if the place holds only 1,500," said Loughery. The strategy is fairly simple—a small building packed with screaming fans makes for better television than a big arena that is only half full. And certain cities are developing reputations as boxing's new "fight towns." It's no longer just Philly, New York, and Las Vegas.

"Montreal is a city we're very interested in because the fans are so vocal," said Loughery, citing Montreal kayo artist **David Lemieux** as a fighter who may appear on ESPN2 this year. Loughery added, "We're also trying to be consistent at 9:00 p.m., which means West Coast shows can be difficult."

Aside from occasional fluctuations, ratings for *FNF* have held steady since the dark old days of the mid 2000s. And technically speaking, *FNF* is still cutting edge.

"I'm not just saying this because I'm wearing my ESPN hat," said Loughery, "but we do have the best boxing production team working today. Production-wise, you'll see a lot of new and interesting things this year. You'll just have to tune in." ■

LISTEN UP

January will be an interesting month for international boxing fans. January 10 will see **Takashi Uchiyama** defend his WBA junior lightweight title against **Jorge Solis** in Tokyo ... One day later in Levallois, France, **Gabriel Campillo** takes on **Thierry Karl** for the vacant European light heavyweight title ... On January 29 in a yet to be named location in South Africa, **Argenis Mendez** battles **Cassius Baloyi** in an IBF junior lightweight eliminator.

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